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RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE

Engraved for G. Cooke.
Dedicated 1836.

NO LEWIS as the COPPER CAPTAIN
Alas I am a fellow of no reckoning
Nor worth a Lady's eye.
And I some s.



THE

BRITISH DRAMA,

A COLLECTION OF THE MOST
ESTEEMED DRAMATIC PRODUCTIONS,

WITH

Biography

OF THE RESPECTIVE AUTHORS;

AND A

CRITIQUE ON EACH PLAY,

BY

R. CUMBERLAND, Esq.

IN FOURTEEN VOLUMES.

.....
VOL. VI.

15.3045
28/10/19

CONTAINING

RULE A WIFE,
WAY TO KEEP HIM,
PROVOKED HUSBAND.

LONDON:

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COMEDY
OF
RULE A WIFE
AND
HAVE A WIFE.
BY BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.
ADAPTED FOR THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,
As performed at the Theatres-Royal
COVENT-GARDEN AND DRURY-LANE.

Regulated from the Prompt Books,

By Permission of the Managers.

WITH A CRITIQUE,

By R. CUMBERLAND, Esq.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas are omitted
in the Representation.

Cooke's Edition.



SUPERBLY EMBELLISHED.

London :

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and sold by all the Booksellers in the
United Kingdom.





CRITIQUE

ON

RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE.

AMONGST the numerous plays that the associated poets, Beaumont and Fletcher, have left to posterity, none stands higher in the public favour than the comedy now under our review. The humorous vivacity of *Michael Perez*, and the strong effect produced by the sudden change of character in *Leon*, have kept this drama on the stage, and secur'd to those characters the support of the best actors of the day, whensoever it was represented; *Estifania* also, from her incidental rather than her actual importance, became a favourite part with the first female performers of the theatre: and thus the comedy has been upheld,

With all its imperfections on its head.

If we look for nature in this composition, we contemplate it either in its most loathsome state of distortion, as in *Cacafogo*; or of depravity, as in *Margaritta* and others. A more arrant knot of sharpers, swindlers, and impostors, never were assembled for the purpose of forming the cast of a comedy; whilst the grossness of the principal lady of the piece exceeds all bounds. If the motives she

avows for her marrying *Leon* were not absolutely out of nature; in other words, if *Margaritta* were not a monster, the fair sex might charge these authors with the foulest libel that ever was produced: but, as the lady is feign'd to do what no lady ever did, we let the fiction pass, and stop our ears against the language she is made to utter. The blustering gentleman, who, under the mask of fatuity, trepanns her into marriage, is as mere a cheat and fortune-hunter as the *Copper Captain*; though one gains a fortune, and the other only a disappointment. In point of morals, the brides are much alike; and, in regard to reformation, both are equally doubtful. The *Duke of Medina* is by no means drawn in the costume of a Spanish grandee, and is only harmless when he can do no mischief.

Upon the whole, if it be enough to form a lively fable, that has neither nature, character, or moral, to recommend it, the object is accomplished; and this comedy, which has received the sanction of those who went before us, will continue to give pleasure to those who shall come after us.

C.





PROLOGUE.

*PLEASURE attend ye, and about ye sit,
The springs of mirth, fancy, delight, and wit,
To stir you up; do not your looks let fall,
Nor to remembrance our late errors call,
Because this day we're Spaniards all again;
The story of our play, and our scene Spain:
The errors, too, do not for this cause hate,
Now we present their wit, and not their state.
Nor, ladies, be not angry, if you see
A young fresh beauty wuntou, and too free,
Seek to abuse her husband, still 'tis Spain;
No such gross errors in your kingdom reign:
You're vestals all, and though we blow the fire,
We seldom make it flame up to desire:
Take no example neither to begin,
For some by precedent delight to sin;
Nor blame the poet if he slip aside,
Sometimes lasciviously if not too wide.
But hold your fans close, and then smile at ease;
A cruel scene did never lady please.
Nor, gentlemen, pray be not you displeas'd,
Though we present some men fool'd, some diseas'd,
Some drunk, some mad we mean not you, you're free,
We tax no further than our comedy,
You are our friends; sit noble, then, and see.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Men.

DUKE OF MEDINA.

DON JUAN DE CASTRO, *a Spanish Colonel.*

SANCHIO, }
ALONZO, } *Officers in the Army.*

MICHAEL PEREZ, *the Copper Captain.*

LEON, *Brother to Altea, and by her contrivance married to Margaritta.*

CACAFOGO, *a rich Usurer.*

Women.

MARGARITTA, *a wanton Lady, married to Leon, by whom she is reclaimed.*

ALTEA, *her Servant.*

CLARA, *a Spanish Lady.*

ESTIFANIA, *a Woman of Intrigue.*

An Old Woman.

Maid.

Visiting Ladies. SCENE, Spain.

RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Chamber. Enter DON JUAN DE CASTRO and
MICHAEL PEREZ.

Michael. ARE your companies full, colonel?

Juan. No, not yet, sir;

Nor will not be this month yet, as I reckon.

How rises your command?

Mich. We pick up still,

And as our monies hold out, we have men come.

About that time I think we shall be full too:

Many young gallants go.

Juan. And unexperient'd.

“The wars are dainty dreams to young hot spirits;

“Time and experience will allay those visions.

“We have strange things to fill our numbers:”

There's one Don Leon, a strange goodly fellow,

Commended to me from some noble friends,

For my Alferes.

Mich. I've heard of him, and that he hath serv'd
before too. [Michael,

Juan. But no harm done, not ev'n meant, Don
That came to my ears yet; ask him a question,
He blushes like a girl, and answers little,

To the point less. “He wears a sword, a good one,

“And good clothes too; he's whole skinn'd, has no
“hurt yet; [tainly;

“Good promising hopes.” I never yet heard cer-
Of any gentleman that saw him angry.

Mich. Preserve him, he'll conclude a peace if need
Many as stout as he will go along with us, [be;

That swear as valiantly as heart can wish;

Their mouths charg'd with six oaths at once, and
whole ones,

That make the drunken Dutch creep into mole-hills.

Juan. 'Tis true; such we must look for. But,
Michael Perez,

When heard you of Donna Margaritta, the great
heiress? [her;

Mich. I hear every hour of her, though I ne'er saw

She is the main discourse. Noble Don Juan de Castro,
 How happy were that man could catch this wench up,
 And live at ease! She's fair and young, and wealthy,
 Infinite wealthy, and as gracious too
 In all her entertainments, as men report.

Juan. But she is proud, sir, that I know for certain,
 And that comes seldom without wantonness :
 He that shall marry her, must have a rare hand.

Mich. Would I were married ; I would find that
 wisdom,
 With a light rein to rule my wife. If e'er woman
 Of the most subtil mould went beyond me,
 I'd give boys leave to hoot me out o' the parish.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, there be two gentlewomen attend to
 speak with you.

Juan. Wait on 'em in.

Mich. Are they two handsome women ?

Serv. They seem so, very handsome ; but they're
 veil'd, sir.

Mich. Thou puttest sugar in my mouth. How it
 melts with me !

I love a sweet young wench.

Juan. Wait on them in, I say. [*Exit Servant.*

Mich. Don Juan.

Juan. Michael, how you burnish ?

Will not this soldier's heat out of your bones yet ;

Mich. There be two.

Juan. Say, what shame have you then ?

Mich. I would fain see that ;

I've been in the Indies twice, and have seen strange
 things ;

But for two honest women :—one I read at once.

Juan. Pr'ythee, be modest.

Mich. I'll be any thing.

Enter Servant, DONNA CLARA, and ESTIFANIA
veil'd.

Juan. You're welcome, ladies.

Mich. Both hooded ! I like 'em well though :
 They came not for advice in law sure hither ;

Act I. RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE. 3

"May be they'd learn to raise the pike; I'm for 'em."
They're very modest! 'tis a fine prelude.

Juan. With me, or with this gentleman, would
you speak, lady?

Cla. With you, sir, as I guess, Juan de Castro.

Mich. Her curtain opens; she is a pretty gentle-
woman.

Juan. I am the man, and shall be bound to fortune,
If I may do any service to your beauties.

Cla. Captain, I hear you're marching down to
To serve the Catholic king. [Flanders,

Juan. I am, sweet lady.

Cla. I have a kinsman, and a noble friend,
Employ'd in those wars; may be, sir, you know him;
Don Campusano, captain of carbines,
To whom I would request your nobleness
To give this poor remembrance. [Gives a letter,

Juan. I shall do it;

I know the gentleman, a most worthy captain.

Cla. Something in private.

Juan. Step aside; I'll serve thee.

[Exeunt Juan and Clara,

Mich. Pr'ythee, let me see thy face.

Estif. Sir, you must pardon me;

Women of our sort, that maintain fair memories,
And keep suspect off from their chastities,
Had need wear thicker veils.

Mich. I'm no blaster of a lady's beauty,
No bold intruder on her special favours:
I know how tender reputation is,
And with what guards it ought to be preserv'd.
Lady, you may to me——

Estif. You must excuse me, signior, I come
Not here to sell myself.

Mich. As I'm a gentleman; by the honour of a
soldier.

Estif. I believe you——

I pray be civil: I believe you'd see me,
And when you've seen me, I believe you'll like me;
But in a strange place, to a stranger too,

As if I came on purpose to betray you,
Indeed I will not.

Mich. I shall love you dearly,
And 'tis a sin to fling away affection;
I have no mistress, no desire to honour
Any but you.

I know not, you have struck me with your modesty
So deep, and taken from me
All the desire I might bestow on others——
Quickly, before they come.

Estif. Indeed I dare not.
But since I see you're so desirous, sir,
To view a poor face that can merit nothing
But your repentance——

Mich. It must needs be excellent.

Estif. And with what honesty you ask it of me;
When I am gone let your man follow me,
And view what house I enter. Thither come,
For there I dare be bold to appear open;
And, as I like your virtuous carriage, then

Enter JUAN, CLARA, and Servant.

I shall be able to give welcome to you.

She hath done her business, I must take my leave, sir.

Mich. I'll kiss your fair white hand, and thank you,
lady.

My man shall wait, and I shall be your servant.
Sirrah, come near, hark.

Serv. I shall do it faithfully. [*Exit.*

Juan. You will command me no more services?

Cla. To be careful of your noble health, dear sir,
That I may ever honour you.

Juan. I thank you,
And kiss your hands. Wait on the ladies down there,
[*Exeunt Ladies and Servant.*

Mich. You had the honour to see the face that
came to you?

Juan. And 'twas a fair one. What was yours, Don
Michael?

Mich. Mine was i' th' eclipse, and had a cloud drawn
over it.

Act I. RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE.

But I believe well, and I hope 'tis handsome.
She had a hand would stir a holy hermit.

Juan. You know none of 'em.

Mich. No.

Juan. Then I do, captain;
But I'll say nothing till I see the proof on't.
Sit close, Don Perez, or your worship's caught.

Mich. Were those she brought love-letters?

Juan. A packet to a kinsman now in Flanders.
Yours was very modest, methought.

Mich. Some young unmanaged thing:
But I may live to see——

Juan. 'Tis worth experience.

Let's walk abroad, and view our companies. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

" A Street. Enter SANCHIO and ALONZO.

" San. What, are you for the wars, Alonzo?

" Alon. It may be ay,

" It may be no, e'en as the humour takes me.

" If I find peace among the female creatures,

" And easy entertainment, I'll stay at home.

" I'm not so far oblig'd yet to long marches

" And mouldy biscuits, to run mad for honour.

" When you're all gone, I have my choice before me.

" San. Ay, of which hospital thou'lt sweat in: wilt
" Thou never leave whoring?

" Alon. There is less danger in't than gunning,
" Sanchio;

" Tho' we be shot sometimes, the shot's not mortal;

" Besides, it breaks no limbs.

" San. But it disables 'em.

" Dost see how thou pullest thy legs after thee,

" As if they hung by points?

" Alon. Better to pull 'em thus, than walk on
" wooden ones;

" Serve bravely for a billet to support me.

" San. Fie, fie, 'tis base.

" Alon. Dost count it base to suffer?

" Suffer abundantly? 'Tis the crown of honour.

" You think it nothing to lie twenty days

" Under a surgeon's hand that has no mercy.

" *San.* As thou hast done, I'm sure : but I perceive now

" Why you desire to stay ; the orient heiress,

" The Margaritta, sir.

" *Alon.* I would I had her.

" *San.* They say she'll marry.

" *Alon.* Yes, I think she will.

" *San.* And marry suddenly, as report goes, too.

" She fears her youth will not hold out, Alonzo.

" *Alon.* I would I had the sheathing on't.

" *San.* They say too,

" She has a greedy eye, that must be fed

" With more than one man's meat.

" *Alon.* Would she were mine,

" I'd cater for her well enough : but, Sanchio,

" There be too many great men that adore her ;

" Princes, and princes' fellows, that claim privilege.

" *San.* Yet those stand off i' the way of marriage ;

" To be tied to a man's pleasure is a second labour.

" *Alon.* She has bought a brave house here in town.

" *San.* I've heard so.

" *Alon.* If she convert it now to pious uses,

" And bid poor gentlemen welcome.

" *San.* When comes she to it ?

" *Alon.* Within these two days : she's in the country yet,

And keeps the noblest house.

" *San.* Then there's some hope of her.

" Wilt thou go my way ?

" *Alon.* No, no, I must leave you,

" And repair to an old gentlewoman that

" Has credit with her, that can speak a good word.

" *San.* Send thee good fortune, but make thy body sound first.

" *Alon.* I am a soldier,

" And too sound a body becomes me not ;

" So farewell, Sanchio.

[*Exeunt.*"]

SCENE III.

Another Street. ESTIFANIA crosses the Stage. Enter a Servant of MICHAEL PEREZ after her.

Serv. 'Tis this or that house, or I've lost my aim ;
They're both fair buildings ;—she walk'd plaguy fast.

Enter ESTIFANIA, courtesies, and exit.

And hereabouts I lost her. Stay, that's she ;

'Tis very she ; she makes me a low court'sy :—

Let me note the place, the street I well remember.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

A Chamber in MARGARITTA's House. Enter three old Ladies.

1st Lady. What should it mean, that in such haste
we're sent for ?

2d Lady. Belike the lady Margaret has some busi-
She'd break to us in private. [*uess*

3d Lady. It should seem so.

'Tis a good lady, and a wise young lady.

2d Lady. And virtuous enough too, that I warrant
For a young woman of her years : 'tis a pity [ye,
To load her tender age with too much virtue.

3d Lady. 'Tis more sometimes than we can well
away with.

Enter ALTEA.

Alt. Good-morrow, ladies.

All. 'Morrow, my good madam.

1st Lady. How does the sweet young beauty, lady
Margaret ?

2d Lady. Has she slept well after her walk last night ?

1st Lady. Are her dreams gentle to her mind ?

Alt. All's well,

She's very well : she sent for you thus suddenly,
To give her counsel in a business
That much concerns her.

2d Lady. She does well and wisely,

“ To ask the counsel of the ancient'st. Madam,

“ Our years have run through many things she knows
“ not.”

Alt. She would fain marry.

1st Lady. 'Tis a proper calling,
And well beseems her years. Who would she yoke
with?

Alt. That's left to argue on. I pray come in,
And break your fast; drink a good cup or two,
To strengthen your understandings, then she'll tell ye.

2d Lady. And good wine breeds good counsel, we'll
yield to ye. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

A Street. Enter JUAN DE CASTRO and LEON.

Juan. Have you seen any service?

Leon. Yes.

Juan. Where?

Leon. Every where.

Juan. What office bore ye?

Leon. None, I was not worthy.

Juan. What captains know you?

Leon. None, they were above me.

Juan. Were you ne'er hurt?

Leon. Not that I well remember;

But once I stole a hen, and then they beat me.

Pray ask me no long questions; I've an ill memory.

Juan. This is an ass. Did you ne'er draw your
sword yet?

Leon. Not to do any harm, I thank Heav'n for't.

Juan. Nor ne'er ta'en prisoner?

Leon. No, I ran away;

For I ne'er had no money to redeem me.

Juan. Can you endure a drum?

Leon. It makes my head ache.

Juan. Are you not valiant when you're drunk?

Leon. I think not; but I am loving, sir.

Juan. What a lump is this man!

Was your father wise?

Leon. Too wise for me, I'm sure;

For he gave all he had to my younger brother.

Juan. That was no foolish part, I'll bear you witness.
Cans't thou lie with a woman?

Leon. I think I could make shift, sir;
But I am bashful.

Juan. In the night?

Leon. I know not.

Darkness indeed may do some good upon me.

Juan. Why art thou sent to me to be my officer,
Ay, and commended too, when thou dar'st not fight?

Leon. There be more officers of my opinion,
Or I'm co'en'd, sir; men that talk more too.

Juan. How wilt thou 'scape a bullet?

Leon. Why, by chance.

They aim at honourable men; alas, I'm none, sir,

Juan. This fellow hath some doubts in his talk
that strike me.

Enter ALONZO.

He cannot be all fool. Welcome, Alonzo.

Alon. What have you got there, Temperance into
your company?

The spirit of peace? we shall have wars by the ounce
then.

Enter CACAFOGO.

Oh, here's another pumpkin, the cramm'd son of a
starv'd usurer, Cacasogo. [fuls

Both their brains butler'd, cannot make two spoon-

Caca. My father's dead, I am a man of war too.

Monies, demesnes; I've ships at sea too, captains.

Juan. Take heed o' the Hollanders, your ships may
leak else. [ards.

Caca. I scorn the Hollanders, there are my drunk-

Alon. Put up your gold, sir, I will borrow it else.

Caca. I am satisfied you shall not.

Come out, I know thee, meet mine anger instantly.

Leon. I never wrong'd ye.

Cacu. Thou'st wrong'd mine honour,

Thou look'st upon my mistress thrice lasciviously,
I'll make it good.

Juan. Do not heat yourself, you will surfeit.

Caca. Thou want'st my money too, with a pair of
base bones,

In whom there was no truth for which I beat thee.

I beat thee much; now I will hurt thee dangerously.

This shall provoke thee. [He strikes.

10 RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE. *Act I.*

“ *Alon.* You struck too low, by a foot sir.

“ *Juan.* You must get a ladder, when you would
“ beat this fellow.”

Leon. I cannot chuse but kick again; pray, pardon me. [thee.

Caca. Hadst thou not ask'd my pardon, I had kill'd
I leave thee, as a thing despis'd, *baso las manos a vos-*
tra Señora. [Exit *Caca.*

Alon. You've 'scap'd [by miracles; there is not in
A spirit of more fury than this fire-drake. [all Spain,

Leon. I see he's hasty, and I'd give him leave
To beat me soundly if he'd take my bond.

Juan. What shall I do with this fellow?

Alon. Turn him off;
He will infect the camp with cowardice,
If he go with thee.

Juan. About some week hence, sir,
If I can hit upon no abler officer,
You shall hear from me.

Leon. I desire no better. [Exeunt.

SCENE VI.

A Chamber in MARGARITTA's House. Enter ESTIFANIA and PEREZ.

Per. You've made me now too bountiful amends,
Lady,

For your strict carriage when you saw me first.
These beauties were not meant to be conceal'd;
It was a wrong to hide so sweet an object;
I could now chide ye, but it shall be thus:
No other anger ever touch your sweetness.

Estif. Y' appear to me so honest and so civil,
Without a blush, sir, I dare bid you welcome.

Per. Now, let me ask your name.

Estif. 'Tis Estifania, the heir of this poor place.

Per. Poor, do you call it?

There's nothing that I cast mine eyes upon,
But shews both rich and admirable; all the rooms
Are hung as if a princess were to dwell here;
The gardens, orchards, every thing so curious,
Is all that plate your own too?

Estif. 'Tis but little,
Only for present use; I've more and richer,
When need shall call, or friends compel me use it;
The suits you see of all the upper chambers,
Are those that commonly adorn the house;
I think I have besides, as fair as Seville,
Or any town in Spain, can parallel.

Per. Now if she be not married, I have some hopes,
Are you a maid?

Estif. You make me blush to answer;
I ever was accounted so to this hour,
And that's the reason that I live retir'd, sir.

Per. Then would I counsel you to marry presently.
(If I can get her I am made for ever.) [*Aside.*]
For every year you lose, you lose a beauty.
A husband now, an honest, careful husband,
Were such a comfort. Will ye walk above stairs?

Estif. This place will fit our talk, 'tis fitter far, sir;
Above there are day-beds, and such temptations
I dare not trust, sir.

Per. She's excellent wise withal, too.

Estif. You nam'd a husband; I am not so strict, sir,
Nor ty'd unto a virgin's solitariness,
But if an honest, and a noble one,
Rich, and a soldier, (for so I've vow'd he shall be,)
Were offer'd me, I think I should accept him.
But above all, he must love.

Per. He were base else.

There's comfort ministered in the word soldier,
How sweetly should I live!

Estif. I'm not so ignorant,
But that I know well how to be commanded,
And how again to make myself obey'd, sir.
I waste but little; I have gather'd much:
My rial not less worth when it is spent,
If spent by my direction. To please my husband,
I hold it as indifferent in my duty,
To be his maid i' th' kitchen or his cook,
As in the hall to know myself the mistress.

Per. Sweet, rich, and provident; now, Fortune,
stick to me.

I am a soldier, and a bachelor, lady;
And such a wife as you I could love infinitely.
They that use many words, some are deceitful;
I long to be a husband, and a good one.
For 'tis most certain I shall make a precedent
For all that follow me to love their ladies.
I'm young, you see, able I'd have you think too;
If't please you know, try me before you take me.
'Tis true, I shall not meet in equal wealth with ye;
But jewels, chains, such as the war has giv'n me,
A thousand ducats too in ready gold,
As rich clothes, too, as any he bears arms, lady.

Estif. You're a gentleman, and fair, I see by ye;
And such a man I'd rather take——

Per. Pray do so.

I'll have a priest o' the sudden.

Estif. And as suddenly
You will repent too.

Per. I'll be hang'd or drown'd first,
By this, and this, and this kiss.

Estif. You're a flatterer,
But I must say there was something when I saw you
First, in that noble face, that stirred my fancy.

Per. I'll stir it better ere you sleep, sweet lady.
I'll send for all my trunks, and give up all to ye,
Into your own dispose, before I bed ye;
And then, sweet wench.

Estif. You have the art to cozen me. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

*An Apartment in MARGARITTA's House. Enter
MARGARITTA, three Ladies, and ALTEA.*

Margaritta. COME in, and give me your opinions
seriously.

1st Lady. You say you have a mind to marry, lady.

Mar. 'Tis true, I have, for to preserve my credit;

" Yet not so much for that, as to preserve my state,
ladies. [tion:

" Conceive me right, there lies the main o' the ques-

" Credit I can redeem, money will imp it;

" But when my money's gone, when the law shall

" Seize that, and for incontinency, strip me

" Of all. [that way?

" 1st Lady. Do you find your body so malicious

" Mar. I find it as all bodies are, that are young

" Lazy and high fed." [and lusty,

I desire my pleasure, and pleasure I must have.

2d Lady. 'Tis fit you should have,

Your years require it, and 'tis necessary;

As necessary as meat to a young lady!

Sleep cannot nourish more. [single?

1st Lady. But might not all this be, and keep ye

You take away variety in marriage,

Th' abundance of your pleasure you are barr'd then;

Is't not abundance that you aim at?

Mar. Yes; why was I made a woman?

2d Lady. And ev'ry day a new?

Mar. Why fair and young, but to use it;

1st Lady. You're still i' th' right; why would you
marry then? [point,

Alt. Because a husband stops all doubts in this
And clears all passages.

2d Lady. What husband mean ye?

Alt. A husband of an easy faith, a fool,
Made by her wealth, and moulded to her pleasure;
One, though he sees himself become a monster,
Shall hold the door, and entertain the maker.

2d Lady. You grant there may be such a man.

1st Lady. Yes, marry; but how to bring him to this
rare perfection. [honour,

2d Lady. They must be chosen so, things of no
Nor outward honesty.

Mar. No, 'tis no matter;

I care not what they are, so they be comely.

2d Lady. Methinks now, a rich lawyer, some such
fellow,

That carries credit, and a face of awe,

“ But lies with nothing but his clients’ business.”

Mar. No, there’s no trusting them, they are too subtle;

The law has moulded them of natural mischief.

1st Lady. Then some grave governor,
Some man of honour, yet an easy man.

Mar. If he has honour I’m undone; I’ll none such.

Alt. With search, and wit, and labour,
I’ve found but one, a right one, and a perfect.

Mar. Is he a gentleman?

Alt. Yes, and a soldier; but as gentle as you’d wish him. A good fellow, and has good clothes, if he knew how to wear ’em.

Mar. Those I’ll allow him;
They are for my credit. Does he understand
But little.

Alt. Very little.

Mar. ’Tis the better.
Have not the wars bred him up to anger?
Alt. No, he won’t quarrel with a dog that bites him;
Let him be drunk or sober, he’s one silence.

Mar. H’as no capacity what honour is;
For that’s a soldier’s good?

Alt. Honour’s a thing too subtle for his wisdom;
If honour lie in eating, he’s right honourable.

Mar. Is he so goodly a man, do you say?

Alt. As you shall see, lady;
But to all this he’s but a trunk.

Mar. I’d have him so;
“ I shall add branches to adorn him.”
Go, find me out this man, and let me see him;
If he be that motion that you tell me of,
And make no more noise, I shall entertain him.
Let him be here.

Alt. He shall attend your ladyship. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A Street. Enter JUAN, ALONZO, and PEREZ.

Juan. Why, thou’rt not married indeed?

Per. No, no, pray think so.

Alas, I am a fellow of no reckoning!

Nor worth a lady's eye.

Alon. Would steal a fortune,
And make none of thy friends acquainted with it,
Nor bid us to the wedding?

Per. No indeed.

There was no wisdom in't, to bid an artist,
An old seducer, to a female banquet.
I can cut up my pie without your instructions.

Juan. Was it the wench i' the veil?

Per. Basta, 'twas she.

The prettiest rogue that e'er you look'd upon;
The loving'st thief.

Juan. And is she rich withal too?

Per. A mine, a mine; there is no end of wealth,
colonel.

I am an ass, a bashful fool. Pr'ythee, colonel;
How do thy companies fill now?

Juan. You're merry, sir;

You intend a safer war at home, belike, now?

Per. I do not think I shall fight much this year,
I find myself given to my ease a little. [colonel;
I care not if I sell my foolish company;
They're things of hazard.

Alon. How it angers me,
This fellow at first sight should win a lady,
A rich young wench—"And I, that have consum'd
"My time and art in searching out their subtleties,
"Like a fool'd alchymist, blow up my hopes still."
When shall we come to thy house, and be freely
merry!

Per. When I have manag'd her a little more.
I have an house to maintain an army.

Alon. If thy wife be fair, thou'lt have few less come
to thee.

Per. Where they'll get entertainment is the point;
Signior, I beat no drum.

"May be I'll march after a month or two,

"To get a fresh stomach. I find, colonel,

"A wantonness in wealth, methinks I agree not with.

Act II. RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE. 17

Mar. You shall be taught. And can you, when she
Go ride abroad, and stay a week or two? [pleases,
You shall have men and horses to attend ye,
And money in your purse.

Leon. Yes, I love riding;
And when I am from home I am so merry.

Mar. Be as merry as you will. Can you as hand-
somely,

When you are sent for back, come with obedience,
And do your duty to the lady loves you?

Leon. Yes, sure, I shall.

Mar. And when you see her friends here,
Or, noble kinsmen, can you entertain
Their servants in the cellar, and be busied,
And hold your peace, whate'er you see or hear?

Leon. 'Twere fit I were hang'd else.

Mar. Come, salute me.

Leon. Ma'am!

Mar. How the fool shakes! I will not eat you, sir.
Can't you salute me?

Leon. Indeed I know not: but if your ladyship
will please to instruct me, sure I shall learn.

Mar. Come on, then.

Leon. Come on, then. [He kisses her.

"*Mar.* Beshrew my heart, he kisses wondrous
" Can you do any thing else? [manly!

"*Leon.* Indeed I know not; but if your ladyship
" will please to instruct me, sure I shall learn."

Mar. You shall then be instructed.
If I should be this lady that affects ye;
Nay, say I marry ye?

Alt. Hark to the lady.

Mar. What money have ye?

Leon. None, madam, nor no friends.
I would do any thing to serve your ladyship.

Mar. You must not look to be my master, sir.
Nor talk i' the house as though you wore the breeches;
No, nor command in any thing.

Leon. I will not;
Alas, I'm not able! I've no wit, madam.

Mar. Nor do not labour to arrive at any;
 'Twill spoil your head. I take you upon charity,
 And like a servant you must be unto me.

“As I behold your duty, I shall love you;

“As you observe me, I may chance lie with ye.”
 Can you mark these?

Leon. Yes, indeed, forsooth.

Mar. There is one thing,
 That if I take ye in, I put ye from me,
 Utterly from me; you must not be saucy,
 No, nor at any time familiar with me,
 Scarce know me, when I call ye not.

Leon. I will not. Alas, I never knew myself sufficiently!

Mar. Nor must not now.

Leon. I'll be a dog to please ye.

Mar. Indeed you must fetch and carry as I appoint ye.

Leon. I were to blame else.

Mar. Kiss me again. [*Kisses her.*

“A strong fellow, there's vigour in his lips.”

If you see me

Kiss any other, twenty in an hour, sir,

You must not start, nor be offended.

Leon. No, if you kiss a thousand, I shall be contented,

It will the better teach me how to please ye.

Alt. I told ye, madam.

Mar. 'Tis the man I wish'd for; the less you speak—

Leon. I'll never speak again, madam,

But when you charge me; then I'll speak softly too.

Mar. Get me a priest; I'll wed him instantly.

But when you're married, sir, you must wait on me,
 And see ye observe my laws.

Leon. Else you shall hang me.

Mar. I'll give you better clothes when you deserve 'em.

Come in, and serve for witness.

Omnes. We shall, madam.

Mar. And then away to the city presently;
 I'll to my new house, and new company.

Act II. RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE. 19

Leon. A thousand crowns are thine; I'm a made

Alt. Do not break out too soon. [man.

Leon. I know my time, wench. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

A Grand Saloon. Enter CLARA and ESTIFANIA
with a Paper.

Cla. What, have you caught him?

Estif. Yes.

Cla. And do you find him

A man of those hopes that you aim'd at?

Estif. Yes, too, and the most kind man;

“And the ablest, also,

“To give his wife content: he is sound as old wine;

“And sô his soundness rises on the palate;

“And there's the man.”

I find him rich, too, Clara.

Cla. Hast thou married him?

Estif. What dost thou think I fish without a bait,
wench?

I bob for fools. He is mine own. I have him.

I told thee what would tickle him like a trout;

And as I cast it, so I caught him daintily;

And all he has I've stow'd at my devotion. [town:

Cla. Does the lady know this? she's coming now to
Now, to live here, in this house.

Estif. Let her come,

She shall be welcome, I am prepar'd for her;

She's mad sure, if she be angry at my fortune;

For what I have made bold.

Cla. Dost thou not love him?

Estif. Yes, entirely well,

As long as there he stays and looks no farther

Into my ends; but when he doubts, I hate him;

And that wise hate will teach me how to cozen him;

“How to decline their wives, and curb their manners;

“To put a stern and strong reign to their natures:

“And hold he is an ass not worth acquaintance,

“That cannot mould a devil into obedience.

“I owe him a good turn for these opinions:

“And, as I find his temper, I may pay him.”

Enter PEREZ.

O here he is; now you shall see a kind man.

Per. My Estifania, shall we to dinner, lamb?

I know thou stay'st for me.

Estif. I cannot eat else.

Per. I never enter, but methinks a paradise
Appears about me.

Estif. You're welcome to it, sir. [wench.

Per. I think I have the sweetest seat in Spain,
Methinks the richest too. We'll eat i' the garden,
In one o' the arbours, there 'tis cool and pleasant;
And have our wine cool'd in the running fountain,
Who's that?

Estif. A friend of mine, sir.

Per. Of what breeding?

Estif. A gentlewoman, sir,

Per. What business has she?

Is she a woman learn'd i' the mathematics;
Can she tell fortunes?

Estif. More than I know, sir.

Per. Or has she e'er a letter from a kinswoman,
That must be deliver'd in my absence, wife?
Or comes she from the doctor to salute ye,
And learn your health? she looks not like a confessor.

Estif. What needs all this? why are you troubled, sir?
What do you suspect? she cannot cuckold ye:
She is a woman, sir, a very woman.

Per. Your very woman may do very well, madam,
Towards the matter; for though she cannot perform it
In her own person, she may do it by proxy.
Your rarest jugglers work still by conspiracy.

Estif. Cry ye mercy, husband, you are jealous then,
And haply suspect me.

Per. No, indeed, wife. [cause,

Estif. Methink you should not till you have more
And clearer too. I'm sure you've heard say, husband,
A woman forc'd will free herself through iron:
A happy calm, and good wife discontented,
May be caught by tricks.

Per. No, no: I do but jest with ye.

Estif. To-morrow, friend, I'll see you.

Cl. I shall leave you

Till then, and pray all may go sweetly with ye. [*Exit.*
[*Knocking.*

Estif. Why, where's the girl? who's at the door?
[*Knock.*

Per. Who knocks there?

Is't for the king you come, ye knock so boisterously?
Look to the door.

Enter Maid.

Maid. My lady, as I live, mistress, my lady's come;
She's at the door: I peep'd through, I saw her,
And a stately company of ladies with her.

Estif. This was a week too soon, but I must meet
with her,

And set a new wheel going; and a subtle one
Must blind this mighty Mars, or I'm ruin'd. [*Aside.*

Per. What are they at the door?

Estif. Such, my Michael,
As you may bless the day they enter'd here;
Such for our good.

Per. 'Tis well,

Estif. Nay, 'twill be better,
If you will let me but dispose the business;
And be a stranger to't, and not disturb me.
What have I now to do but advance your fortune?

Per. Do, I dare trust thee; I am ashain'd I was angry.
I find thee a wise young wife.

Estif. I'll wise your worship
Before I leave ye. [*Aside.*] Pray ye walk by, and say
nothing,

Only salute them, and leave the rest to me, sir;
I was born to make ye a man.

Per. The rogue speaks heartily; [her.
Her good-will colours in her cheeks; I'm born to love
I must be gentle to these tender natures:
A soldier's rude harsh words befit not ladies;
Nor must we talk to them, as we talk to
Our officers. I'll give her way; for 'tis for me she
Works now; I am husband, heir, and all she has.

Per. If easily it would come back.

Estif. I swear, sir, as easily as it came on.

“Is't not pity

“To let such a gentlewoman for a little help——”

You give away no house.

Per. Clear but that question.

Estif. I'll put the writings into your hand.

Per. Well then.

Estif. And you shall keep them safe.

Per. I'm satisfied.—Would I had the wench too.

Estif. When she has married him,

So infinite his love is link'd unto her,

You, I, or any one that helps at this pinch,

May have, Heaven knows what.

Per. I'll remove my trunks straight.

And take some poor house by, 'tis but for four days.

Estif. I have a poor old friend; there we will be.

Per. 'Tis well then.

Estif. Go handsome off, and leave the house clear.

Per. Well.

Estif. That little stuff we'll use shall follow after;
And a boy to guide ye. Peace, and we are made both.

Mar. Come, let's go in.

Are all the rooms kept sweet, wench?

Estif. They're sweet and neat. [Exit Perez.]

Mar. Why, where's your husband?

Estif. Gone, madam. [lady.]

When you come to your own, he must give place,

Mar. Well, send you joy, you would not let me

Yet I shall not forget ye. [know't,

Estif. Thank your ladyship.

“*Mar.* Come, lead me.” [Exeunt.]

ACT III. SCENE I.

A Chamber. Enter MARGARITTA and ALTEA.

Altea. ARE you at ease now? Is your heart at rest,

“Now you have got a shadow, an umbrella,

“To keep the scorching world's opinion

“From your fair credit.”

Mar. I am at peace, Altea,
 If he continue but the same he shews,
 And be a master of that ignorance
 He outwardly professes, I am happy.
 "The pleasure I shall live in, and the freedom,
 "Without the squint eye of the law upon me,
 "Or prating liberty of tongues that envy!"

Alt. You're a made woman.

Mar. But if he should prove now
 A crafty and dissembling kind of husband,
 One read in knavery, and brought up in the art
 Of villainy conceal'd.

Alt. My life, an innocent.

Mar. That's it I aim at.

That's it I hope too, then I'm sure I rule him :

"For innocents are like obedient children?
 "Brought up under a hard mother-in-law, a cruel,
 "Who, being not us'd to breakfasts and collations,
 "When they have coarse bread offered, are thankful,
 "And take it for a favour too."

Are the rooms made ready

To entertain my friends? I long to dance now,

"And to be wanton. Let me have a song. Is the
 "great couch up

"The duke of Medina sent?

"*Alt.* 'Tis up and ready.

"*Mar.* And day-beds in all chambers?

Alt. "In all, lady."

Your house is nothing now but various pleasures.

The gallants begin to gaze too.

Mar. Let 'em gaze on.

I was brought up a courtier, high and happy;

And company is my delight and courtship;

And handsome servants at my will. Where's my
 good husband?

Where does he wait?

Alt. He knows his distance, madam.

I warrant ye he is busy in the cellar

Among his fellow-servants, or asleep,

Till your commands awake him.

Enter LEON and LORENZO.

Mar. 'Tis well, Altea,
It should be so; my ward I must preserve him.
Who sent for him? How dare he come uncall'd for?
His bonnet on too!

Alt. Sure he sees you not.

Mar. How scornfully he looks!

Leon. Are all the chambers
Deck'd and adorn'd thus for my lady's pleasure?
New hangings every hour for entertainment?
And new plate bought, new jewels to give lustre.

Ser. They are; and yet there must be more and
It is her will. [richer;

Leon. Hum, is it so? 'Tis excellent.
Is it her will, too, to have feasts and banquets,
Revels and masques?

Ser. She ever lov'd 'em dearly;
And we shall have the bravest house kept now, sir.
I must not call ye master; she has warn'd me;
Nor must not put my hat off to you.

Leon. 'Tis no fashion.
What though I be her husband, I'm your fellow;
I may cut first?

Ser. That's as you shall deserve, sir.

Leon. *I thank you, sir.*—"And when I lie with

"*Ser.* May be I'll light ye: [her—

"On the same point you may do me that service."

Enter a Lady.

1st Lady. Madam, the Duke Medina, with some
captains,

Will come to dinner, and have sent rare wine,
And their best services.

Mar. They shall be welcome.

See all be ready in the noblest fashion;

"The house perfum'd.

"Now I shall take my pleasure,

"And not my neighbour justice maunder at me."

Go, get your best clothes on; but till I call ye,
Be sure you be not seen. Dine with the gentlewomen,
And behave yourself handsomely, sir; 'tis for my credit.

Enter a second Lady.

2d Lady. Madam, the lady Julia——

Leon. That's a bawd;

A three pil'd bawd; bawd-major to the army.

2d Lady. Has brought her coach to wait upon your ladyship,

And to be informed if you will take the air this morning.

Leon. The neat air of her nunnery.

Mar. Tell her no; i' the afternoon I'll call on her.

2d Lady. I will, madam. [*Exit.*

“*Mar.* Why are you not gone to prepare yourself.

“ May be you shall be sewer to the first course.

“ A portly presence. Altea, he looks lean—

“ 'Tis a vast knave, he will not keep his flesh well.

“ *Alt.* A willing, madam, one that needs no spur—
“ ring.”

Leon. Faith, madam, in my little understanding,
You'd better entertain your honest neighbours,
Your friends about ye, that may speak well of ye,
And give a worthy mention of your bounty.

Mar. How now, what's this?

Leon. 'Tis only to persuade ye.

Courtiers are tickle things to deal withal,
A kind of march-pane men that will not last, madam;
An egg and pepper goes farther than their potions;
And in a well-knit body, a poor parsnip
Will play his prize above their strong potables.

Mar. The fellow's mad!

Leon. He that shall counsel ladies,
That hath both liquorish and ambitious eyes,
Is either mad or drunk, let him speak gospel.

Alt. He breaks out modestly.

Leon. Pray be not angry;
My indiscretion has made bold to tell ye
What you'll find true.

Mar. Thou dar'st not talk?

Leon. Not much, madam;
You have a tie upon your servant's tongue,
He dare not be so bold as reason bids him;

'Twere fit there were a stronger on your temper.
Ne'er look so stern upon me, I'm your husband :
But what are husbands? Read the New World's
Wonders,

Such husbands as this monstrous world produces,
And you will scarce find such strange deformities;
They're shadows to conceal your venal virtues;
Sails to your mills, that grind with all occasions;
Balls that lie by you, to wash out your stains;
And bills nail'd up with horns before your doors,
To rent out wantonness.

Mar. Do you hear him talk ?

Leon. I've done, madam :

An ox once spoke, as learned men deliver ;
Shortly I shall be such, then I'll speak wonders.

'Till when I tie myself to my obedience. [*Exit.*

Mar. First I'll untie myself. Did you mark the
gentleman,

How boldly and how saucily he talk'd,
And how unlike the lump I took him for !

" The piece of ignorant dough, he stood up to me,
" And rated my commands."

This was your providence,
Your wisdom, to elect this gentleman,
Your excellent forecast in the man, your knowledge ;
What think ye now ?

Alt. I think him an ass still. [him,
This boldness some of your people have blown into
This wisdom too, with strong wine ; 'tis a tyrant,
And a philosopher also, and finds out reasons. [there,

Mar. I'll have my cellar lock'd, no school kept
Nor no discovery. I'll turn my drunkards,
Such as are understanding in their draughts,
And dispute learnedly the whys and wherefores,
To grass immediately ; I'll keep all fools
Sober or drunk, still fools that shall know nothing.
Nothing belongs to mankind but obedience,
And such a hand I'll keep over this husband.

Alt. He'll fall again : my life he cries by this time :
Keep him from drink, he's a high constitution.

*Enter LEON.**Leon.* Shall I wear my new suit, madam?*Mar.* No, your old clothes.

And get you into the country presently, [tuals,
 And see my hawks well train'd: you shall have vic-
 Such as are fit for saucy palates, sir,

And lodgings with the hinds, it is too good too.

Leon. Good madam, be not so rough with repentance.*Alt.* You see how he comes round again.*Mar.* I see not what I expect to see. [ship.*Leon.* You shall see, madam, if it please your lady-*Alt.* He's humbled;

Forgive, good lady.

Mar. Well, go get you handsome,
 And let me hear no more.

Leon. Have ye yet no feelings?

I'll pinch you to the bones then, my proud lady. [*Exit.*

Mar. See you preserve him thus, upon my favour.
 You know his temper, tie him to the grindstone;
 The next rebellion I'll be rid of him.

I'll have no needy rascals I tie to me

Dispute my life. Come in, and see all handsome.

Alt. I hope to see you so too, I've wrought ill else.
 [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

*An ordinary Apartment. Enter PEREZ.**Per.* Shall I

Never return to mine own house again?

We're lodg'd here in the miserablest dog-hole,

A conjuror's circle gives content above it;

A hawk's mew is a princely palace to it:

We have a bed no bigger than a basket,

And we lie like butter clapt together,

And sweat ourselves to sauce immediately;

The fumes are infinite inhabit here too,

"And to that so thick, they cu' like marmalade;"

So various too, they'll pose a gold finder.

Never return to mine own paradise—

Why, wife, I say; why, Estifania?

Estif. [*Within.*] I'm going presently.

Per. Make haste, good jewel.

I'm like the people that live in the sweet islands :

I die, I die, if I stay but one day more here.

“ My lungs are rotten with the damp that rise,

“ And I cough nothing now but stinks of all sorts.”

The inhabitants we have are two starv'd rats,

(For they're not able to maintain a cat here,)

And those appear as fearful as two devils;

They've eat a map of the whole world up already,

And if we stay a night, we're gone for company.

There's an old woman that's now grown to marble,

Dry'd in this brick-kiln, and she sits i' the chimney,

(Which is but three tiles rais'd, like a house of cards)

The true proportion of an old smoak'd Sybil.

There is a young thing too, that nature meant

For a maid servant, but 'tis now a monster ;

She has a husk about her like a chesnut,

With laziness, and living under the line here ;

And these two make a hollow sound together,

Like frogs or winds between two doors that in murmur.

Enter ESTIFANIA.

Mercy deliver me. Oh, are you come, wife !

Shall we be free again ?

Estif. I am now going,

And you shall presently to your own house, sir :

The remembrance of this small vexation

Will be argument of mirth for ever.

By that time you have said your orisons

And broke your fast, I shall be back, and ready

To usher you to your old content, your freedom.

Per. Break my fast, break my neck rather.

Is there any thing here to eat

But one another, like a race of cannibals ?

A piece of butter'd wall you think is excellent.

Let's have our house again immediately,

And pray ye take heed unto the furniture,

None be embezzled.

Estif. Not a pin, I warrant ye.

Per. And let 'em instantly depart.

0 RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE. *Act III.*

Estif. They shall both ; there's reason in all courtesy.
For by this time I know she has acquainted him,
And has provided too : she sent me word, sir,
And will give over gratefully unto you.

Per. I will walk i' the church yard ;
The dead cannot offend more than these living.
An hour hence I'll expect ye.

Estif. I'll not fail, sir. [ner,

Per. And do you hear ? let's have a handsome din-
And see all things be decent as they have been ;
And let me have a strong bath to restore me ;
I stink like a stale-fish shambles, or an oil-shop.

Estif. You shall have all which some interpret
nothing.

I'll send ye people for the trunks afore-hand,
“ And for the stuff.”

Per. Let 'em be known and honest ;
And do my service to your niece.

Estif. I shall, sir :
But if I come not at my hour, come thither,
That they may give you thanks for your fair courtesy,
And pray you be brave for my sake.

Per. I observe ye. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

*A Street. Enter JUAN DE CASTRO, SANCHIO, and
CACAFOGO.*

San. Thou'rt very brave.

Caca. I've reason, I have money.

San. Is money reason ?

Caca. Yes, and rhyme too, Captain.
If you've no money, you're an ass.

San. I thank ye. [ney.

Caca. Ye've manners, ever thank him that has mo-

San. Wilt thou lend me any ?

Caca. Not a farthing, Captain :

Captains are casual things. [bond

San. Why so are all men. Thou sha't have my

Caca. Nor bonds nor fetters, Captain.

My money is my own, I make no doubt on't.

Juan. What dost thou do with it ?

Caca. Put it to pious uses.

Buy wine and wenches, and undo young coxcombs
That would undo me.

Juan. Are those hospitals?

Caca. I first provide to fill my hospitals
With creatures of mine own, that I know wretched,
And then I build: those are more bound to pray for me:
Besides, I keep th' inheritance in my name still.

Juan. A provident charity. Are you for the wars,

Caca. I am not poor enough to be a soldier, [sir?
Nor have I faith enough to ward a bullet;
This is no lining for a trench, I take it.

Juan. Ye have said wisely.

Caca. Had you but my money,
You'd swear it, colonel. I had rather drill at home
A hundred thousand crowns, and with more honour,
Than exercise ten thousand fools with nothing.
A wise man safely feeds, fools cut their fingers.

San. A right state usurer. Why dost not marry,
And live a reverend justice?

Caca. Is it not nobler to command a reverend justice,
than to be one?

And for a wife, what need I marry, captain,
When every courteous fool that owes me money,
Owes me his wife too, to appease my fury?

Juan. Wilt thou go to dinner with us?

Caca. I will go and view the pearl of Spain, the orient
Fair one, the rich one too; and I will be respected.
I bear my patent here; I will talk to her;
And when your captainships shall stand aloof,
And pick your noses, I will pick the purse
Of her affection.

Juan. The Duke dines there to-day too, the Duke
of Medina.

Caca. Let the king dine there,
He owes me money, and so far's my creature.
And certainly I may make bold with mine own, captain.

San. Thou wilt eat monstrously.

Caca. Like a true born Spaniard:
Eat as I were in England, where the beef grows:

And I will drink abundantly, and then
 Talk ye as wantonly as Ovid did,
 To stir the intellectuals of the ladies ;
 I learnt it of my father's amorous scrivener.

Juan. If we should play now, you must supply me.

Caca. You must pawn a horse troop.
 And then have at ye, colonel.

San. Come, let's go.

This rascal will make rare sport. How the ladies
 Will laugh at him! [too.

Juan. If I light on him I'll make his purse sweat

Caca. Will ye lead, gentlemen? [Exeunt.

SCENE IV.

*An ordinary Apartment. Enter PEREZ, Old Woman,
 and Maid.*

Per. Nay, pray ye come out, and let me understand
 And tune your pipe a little higher, lady ; [ye,
 I'll hold ye fast. How came my trunks open ?

And my goods gone ? What pick-lock spirit——

Old Wom. Ha ! What would ye have ?

Per. My goods again. How came my trunks all

Old Wom. Are your trunks all open ? [open ?

Per. Yes, and clothes gone, [beef !

And chains and jewels. How she smells like hung
 The palsy, and pick-locks. Fye, how she belches
 The spirit of garlic !

Old Wom. Where's your gentlewoman ?
 The young fair woman ?

Per. What's that to my question ?
 She is my wife, and gone about my business.

Maid. Is she your wife, sir ?

Per. Yes, sir : is that a wonder ?
 Is the name of wife unknown here ?

Old Wom. Is she duly and truly your wife ?

Per. Duly and truly my wife ! I think so,
 For I married her. It was no vision sure !

Maid. She has the keys, sir. [spirit ?

Per. I know she has ; but who has all my goods,

Old Wom. If you be married to that gentlewoman,
 You are a wretched man : she has twenty husbands.

Maid. She tells you true.

Old Wom. And she has cozen'd all, sir.

Per. The devil she has ; I had a fair house with her,
That stands hard by, and furnish'd royally.

Old Wom. You're cozen'd too, 'tis none of her's,
It is a lady's. [good gentleman,

Maid. The lady Margaritta ; she was her servant.
And kept the house ; but going from her, sir,
For some lewd tricks she play'd.

Per. Plague o' the devil ;
Am I, i' the full meridian of my wisdom,
Cheated by a stale quean ! What kind of lady
Is that that owns the house ?

Old Wom. A young sweet lady.

Per. Of low stature.

Old Wom. She's indeed but little, but she's won-

Per. I feel I'm cozen'd : [drous fair.
Now I am sensible I am undone.

This is the very woman sure, that cousin,
She told me would entreat but for four days
To make the house hers—I am entreated sweetly.

Maid. When she went out this morning, I saw, sir,
She had two women at the door attending,
And there she gave 'em things, and loaded 'em :
But what they were—I heard your trunks too open,
If they be yours.

Per. They were mine while they were laden ;
But now they've cast their calves, they're not worth
Was she her mistress, say you ? [owning.

Old Wom. Her own mistress, her very mistress, sir ;
and all you saw
About her in that house was hers.

Per. No plate, no jewels, nor no hangings ?

Maid. Not a farthing ; she's poor, sir, a poor shift-

Per. No money ? [ing thing.

Old Wom. Abominable poor, as poor as we are,
Money as rare to her, unless she steal it.
But for one single gown her lady gave her,
She might go bare, good gentlewoman.

Per. I'm mad now :

I think I am as poor as she, I'm wild else.
 One single suit I have left too, and that's all,
 And if she steals that she must slay me for it.
 Where does she use?

Old Wom. You may find the truth as soon.
 Alas, a thousand conceal'd corners, sir, she lurks in ;
 And here she gets a fleece, and there another,
 And lives in mists and smokes where none can find

Per. Is she a whore too? [her.

Old Wom. Little better, gentleman :
 I dare not say she is so, sir, because
 She's yours, sir : these five years she has fir'd
 A pretty living, " until she came to serve.
 " I fear he will knock my brains out for lying."

Per. She has fir'd me finely.
 A whore and thief ; two excellent moral learnings
 In one she-saint. I hope to see her legend.
 Have I been fear'd for my discoveries,
 And been courted by all women to conceal 'em ;
 Have I so long studied the art of this sex,
 And read the warning to young gentlemen ;
 Have I profess'd to tame the pride of ladies,
 And made them bear all tests, and am I trick'd now ?
 Caught in my own noose ? Here's a rial left yet,
 There's for your lodging, and your meat for a week ;
 A silk-worm lives at a more plentiful ordinary,
 And sleeps in a sweeter box.
 Farewell, great-grandmother ;
 If I do find you were accessary,
 'Tis but the cutting off two smoaking minutes !
 I'll hang ye presently.

Old Wom. And I deserve it—I tell you truth.

Per. Not I, I am an ass, mother.

Old Wom. O the rogue, the villain ! Is this
 usage for the fair sex. [Exeunt.

SCENE V.

*A grand Apartment. Enter the Duke of MEDINA,
 JUAN DE CASTRO, ALONZO, SANCHIO, CACA-
 FOGO, and Attendants.*

Duke. A goodly house.

Juan. And richly furnish'd too, sir.

Alon. Hung wantonly; I like that preparation;
It stirs the blood into a hopeful banquet,
And intimates the mistress free and jovial;
I love a house where pleasure prepares welcome.

Duke. Now, Cacafo, how like you this mansion;
'Twere a brave pawn.

Caca. I shall be master of it; [spacious;
'Twas built for my bulk, the rooms are wide and
Airy and full of ease, and that I love well.
I'll tell you when I taste the wine, my lord;
And take the height of her table with my stomach.
How my affection stands to the young lady.

Enter MARGARITTA, ALTEA, Ladies, and Servant.

Mar. All welcome to your Grace, and to these
soldiers,

You honour my poor house with your fair presence;
Those few slight pleasures that inhabit here, sir,
I do beseech your Grace command, they're yours,
Your servant but preserves 'em to delight ye.

Duke. I thank ye, lady, I am bold to visit ye,
Once more to bless mine eyes with your sweet beauty,
'T has been a long night since you left the court,
For till I saw you now, no day broke to me.

Mar. Bring in the Duke's meat.

San. She's most excellent.

Juan. Most admirable fair as e'er I look'd on;
I rather would command her than my regiment.

Caca. I'll have a fling, 'tis but a thousand ducats,
Which I can cozen up in ten days,

“ And some few jewels to justify my knavery.

“ Say, shall I marry her, she'll get more money

“ Than all my usury, put my knavery to it;

“ She appears the most infallible way of purchase.

“ I could wish her a size or two stronger for the en-
“ counter,

“ For I am like a lion where I lay hold:

“ But these lambs will endure a plaguy load,

“ And never bleat neither: that, sir, time has taught

“ I am so virtuous now I cannot speak to her, [us.

"The errantest shame-fac'd ass ; I broil away too."

Enter LEON.

Mar. Why, where's this dinner?

Leon. 'Tis not ready, madam,
Nor shall it be, until I know the guests too,
Nor are they fairly welcome till I bid 'em. [thing.

Juan. Is not this my Alferes ? he looks another
Are miracles a foot again?

Mar. Why, sirrah ; why, sirrah, you.

Leon. I hear you, saucy woman ;
And, as you are my wife, command your absence,
And know your duty ; 'tis the crown of modesty.

Duke. Your wife !

Leon. Yes, good my lord, I am her husband,
And, pray, take notice, that I claim that honour,
And will maintain it.

Caca. If thou be'st her husband,
I am determin'd thou shalt be my cuckold ;
I'll be thy faithful friend.

Leon. Peace, dirt and dunghill,
I will not lose my anger on a rascal.
Provoke me more, I'll beat thy blown up body
Till thou rebound'st like a tennis-ball.

Caca. I'll talk with you another time. [Exit.

Alon. This is miraculous !

San. Is this the fellow,
That had the patience to become a fool,
" A flutter'd fool, and on a sudden break,
" As if he would shew a wonder to the world,
" Both in bravery and fortune too ?"
I am astonished !

Mar. I'll be divorc'd immediately.

Leon. You shall not.

You shall not have so much will to be wicked.
I am more tender of your honour, lady.
You took me for a shadow,
You took me to gloss over your discredit,
To be your fool,
You had thought you had found a coxcomb.
I'm innocent of any foul dishonour I mean to ye,

Only I will be known to be your lord now,
And be a fair one too, or I will fall for't.

Mar. I do command ye from me, thou poor fellow,
Thou cozen'd fool.

Leon. Thou cozen'd fool,
I will not be commanded: I'm'above ye.
You may divorce me from your favour, lady,
But from your state you never shall. I'll hold that,
And hold it to my use, the law allows it.
And then maintain your wantonness, I'll wink at it.

Mar. Am I brav'd thus in mine own house?

Leon. 'Tis mine, madam;
You are deceiv'd, I'm lord of it, I rule it.
And all that's in't; you've nothing to do here, madam,
But as a servant to sweep clean the lodgings,
And at my farther will to do me service,
And so I'll keep it.

Mar. 'Tis well.

Leon. It shall be better.

Mar. As you love me, give way.

Leon. I will give none, madam;
I stand upon the ground of my own honour,
And will maintain it: you shall know me now
To be an understanding, feeling man,
And sensible of what a woman aims at;
A young proud woman, that has will to sail with;
A wanton woman, that her blood provokes too.
I cast my cloud off, and appear myself,
The master of this little piece of mischief,
And I will put a spell about your feet, lady;
They shall not wander but where I give way now.

Duke. Is this the fellow that the people pointed at,
For the mere sign of man, the walking image?
He speaks wondrous highly.

Leon. As a husband ought, sir,
In his own house, and it becomes me well too.
I think your grace would grieve if you were put to it,
To have a wife or servant of your own;
(For wives are reckon'd in the rank of servants)
Under your own roof to command ye.

“ *Juan.* Brave! a strange conversion; thou shalt
“ lead

“ In chief now.” [sir?

Duke. Is there no difference betwixt her and you,

Leon. Not now my lord, my fortune makes me

And, as I am an honest man, I’m nobler. [ev’n,

Mar. Get me my coach.

Leon. Let me see who dares get it

Till I command; I’ll make him draw your coach,

And eat your coach too (which will be hard diet),

That executes your will; or, take your coach, lady,

I give you liberty; and take your people,

Which I turn off; and take your will abroad with ye,

Take all these freely, but take me no more,

And so farewell.

Duke. Nay, sir, you shall not carry it

So bravely off; you shall not wrong a lady

In a high huffing strain, and think to bear it.

We shall not stand by as bawds to your brave fury.

To see a lady weep—*Draw, sir.*

Leon. They’re tears of anger,

Wrung from her rage, because her will prevails not.

She would e’en now swoon if she could not cry,

“ Else they were excellent, and I should grieve too;

“ But falling thus, they shew not sweet nor orient.”

Put up, my lord; this is oppression,

And calls the sword of justice to relieve me,

The law to lend her hand, the king to right me,

All which shall understand how you provoke me.

In mine own house to brave me, is this princely?

Then to my guard, and if I spare your grace,

And do not make this place your monument,

Too rich a tomb for such a rude behaviour,

Mercy forsake me.

[*Draws.*

I have a cause will kill a thousand of ye.

Juan. Hold, fair sir, I beseech ye,

The gentleman but pleads his own right nobly.

Leon. He that dares strike against the husband’s
freedom,

The husband’s curse stick to him, a tam’d cuckold,

His wife be fair and young, but most dishonest,
Most impudent, and he have no feeling of it,
“ No conscience to reclaim her from a monster ;”
Let her lie by him like a flattering ruin,
And at one instant kill both name and honour :
“ Let him be lost, no eye to weep his end,
“ Nor find no earth that’s base enough to bury him.”
Now, sir, fall on. I’m ready to oppose ye.

Duke. I’ve better thought. I pray, sir, use your wife well.

Leon. Mine own humanity will teach me that, sir.
And now, you’re welcome all, and we’ll to dinner :
This is my wedding day.

Duke. I’ll cross your joy yet.

Juan. I’ve seen a miracle ; hold thine own, soldier.
Sure they dare fight in fire that conquer women.

“ *San.* He has beaten all my loose thoughts out of
“ As if he had thresh’d ’em out of the husk.” [me,

Enter PEREZ.

Per. Save ye, which is the lady of the house ?

Leon. That’s she, sir, that good-natur’d pretty lady,
If you’d speak with her.

Juan. Don Michael !

Per. Pray do not know me, I am full of business.
When I have more time I’ll be merry with ye.
It is the woman. Good madam, tell me truly,
Had you a maid call’d Estifania ?

Mar. Yes, truly had I.

Per. Was she a maid, d’you think ?

Mar. I dare not swear for her.——

For she had but a scant fame.

Per. Was she your kinswoman ?

Mar. Not that ever I knew ; now I look better,
I think you married her ; give you much joy, sir.

Per. Give me a halter.

Mar. You may reclaim her ; ’twas a wild young girl.

Per. Is not this house mine, madam ?
Was she not owner of it ? “ Pray speak truly.”

Mar. No, certainly ; I’m sure my money paid for it,
And ne’er remember yet I gave it you, sir.

Per. The hangings and the plate too?

Mar. All are mine, sir.

And every thing you see about the building :

She only kept my house when I was absent;

And so I'll keep it, I was weary of her.

Per. Where is your maid?

Mar. Do you not know that have her?

She's yours now, why should I look after her?

Since that first hour I came I never saw her.

Per. I saw her later, would the devil had had her.
It is all true, I find; a wild-fire take her.

Juan. Is thy wife with child, Don Michael? thy
Art thou a man yet? [excellent wife?

Alon. When shall we come and visit thee?

San. And eat some rare fruit? Thou hast admirable orchards.

You are so jealous now! Pox o' your jealousy,
How scornfully you look,

Per. Pr'ythee leave fooling,
I'm in no humour now to fool and prattle.
Did she ne'er play the wag with you?

Mar. Yes, many times;
So often that I was asham'd to keep her.
But I forgave her, sir, in hopes she'd mend still;
And had not you o' the instant married her,
I'd put her off.

Per. I thank ye; I am blest still;
Which way soe'er I turn I'm a made man.
Miserably gull'd beyond recovery.

Juan. You'll stay and dine?

Per. Certain I cannot, captain.
Hark in thine ear, I am the arrant'st puppy,
The miserablest ass!—But I must leave ye.
I am in haste, in haste. Bless you good madam,
And may you prove as good as my wife.

Leon: *What then, sir?*

Per. *No matter, if the devil had one to fetch the other.* [Exit Perez.]

Leon. Will you walk in, sir, will your grace but honour me.

Act IV. RULE A WIFE AND HAVE A WIFE. 41
And taste our dinner? You are nobly welcome,
All anger's past, I hope, and I shall serve ye. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Street. Enter PEREZ.

Perez. I'LL to a conjuror, but I'll find this pole-cat,
This pilfering whore. A plague of veils, I cry,
And covers for the impudence of women,
Their sanctity in show will deceive devils.
It is my evil angel, let me bless me.

Enter ESTIFANIA, with a casket.

Estif. 'Tis he! I'm caught. I must stand to it
stoutly,
And show no shake of fear. I see he's angry,
Vex'd at the uttermost.

Per. My worthy wife,
I have been looking of your modesty
All the town over.

Estif. My most noble husband,
I'm glad I found ye; for in truth I'm weary,
Weary and lame with looking out your lordship.

Per. I've been in bawdy-houses——

Estif. I believe you, and very lately too,

Per. Pray ye, pardon me;
To seek your ladyship, I have been in cellars,
In private cellars, where the thirsty bawds
Hear your confessions; I have been at plays,
To look you out among the youthful actors;
At puppet-shows, you are mistress of the motions;
“ At gossiping I hearken'd after you,
“ But among those confusions of lewd tongues,
“ There's no distinguishing beyond a Babel;
“ I was amongst the nuns, because you sing well,
“ But they say yours are bawdy songs, and they mourn
“ for ye;”

And last I went to church to seek you out,
'Tis so long since you were there, they have forgot you.

Estif. You've had a pretty progress; I'll tell mine
To look you out, I went to twenty taverns— [now.]

Per. And are you sober?

Estif. Yes, I reel not yet, sir;

Where I saw twenty drunk, most of 'em soldiers,
There I had great hope to find you disguis'd too;
From hence to the dicing-house, there I found quarrels
Needless and fenceless, swords, pots, and candlesticks,
Tables, and stools, and all in one confusion,
And no man knew his friend. I left this chaos,
And to the surgeon's went, he will'd my stay,
For, says he, learnedly, if he be tippled,
Twenty to one he whores, and then I hear of him;
If he be mad, he quarrels, then he comes too.
I sought ye where no safe thing would have ventur'd,
Amongst diseases, base and vile, vile women,
For I remember'd your old Roman axiom,
The more the danger, still the more the honour.
Last, to your confessor I came, who told me,
You were too proud to pray; and here I found ye.

Per. She bears up bravely, and the rogue is witty;
But I shall dash it instantly to nothing.
Here leave we off our wanton languages,
And now conclude we in a sharper tongue.

Why am I cozen'd?—

Estif. Why am I abus'd?

Per. Thou most vile, base, abominable——

Estif. Captain.

Per. Thou stinking, over-stew'd, incorrigible——

Estif. Captain.

Per. Do you echo me?

Estif. Yes, sir, and go before ye,
And round about ye: why do you rail at me,
For that was your own sin, your own knavery?

Per. And brave me too?

Estif. You'd best now draw your sword, captain!
Draw it upon a woman, do, brave captain.
Upon your wife, oh, most renown'd captain!

Per. A plague upon thee, answer me directly;
Why didst thou marry me?

Estif. To be my husband:

I thought you had had infinite, but I'm cozen'd.

Per. Why didst thou flatter me, and shew me wonders?

A house and riches, when they are but shadows,
Shadows to me!

Estif. Why did you work on me?

It was but my part to requite you, sir, [me
With your strong soldier's wit, and swore you'd bring
So much in chains, so much in jewels, husband,
So much in right rich clothes?

Per. Thou hast 'em, rascal;

I gave 'em to thy hands, my trunks and all,
And thou hast open'd them, and sold my treasure.

Estif. Sir, there's your treasure, sell it to a tinker
To mend old kettles! Is this noble usage?
Let all the world view here the captain's treasure.
A man would think now these were worthy matters;
Here's a shoeing horn chain gilt over, how it scenteth,
Worse than the dirty mouldy heels it serv'd for;
And here's another of a lesser value,
So little, I would shame to tie my dog in't,
These are my jointure; blush and save a labour,
Or these else will blush for ye.

Per. A fire subtil ye, are ye so crafty?

Estif. Here's a goodly jewel;
Did not you win this at Goletta, captain?
Or took it in the field from some brave bashaw?
See how it sparkles—Like an old lady's eyes;
“ And fills each room with light like a close lanthorn,
This would do rarely in an abbey window,
“ To cozen pilgrims.”

Per. Pr'ythee leave prating.

Estif. And here's a chain of whittings eyes for pearls,
A mussel-monger would have made a better.

Per. Nay, pr'ythee, wife, my clothes, my clothes.

Estif. I'll tell ye,
Your clothes are parallels to these, all counterfeit.
Put these and them on, you're a man of copper,
“ A kind of candlestick,” [husband,
A copper, a copper captain; these you thought, my
To have cozen'd me withal, but I am quit with you.

Per. Is there no house then, nor no ground about
No plate nor hangings? [it?

Estif. There are none, sweet husband.
Shadow for shadow is as equal justice.

[*Perez sings—Estif. sings.*

Can you rail now? Pray put your fury up, sir;
And speak great words, you are a soldier, thunder.

Per. I will speak little, I have play'd the fool,
And so I am rewarded.

Estif. You have spoke well, sir;
And now I see you're so conformable,
I'll heighten you again. Go to your house,
They're packing to be gone, you must sup there,
I'll meet you, and bring clothes and clean linen after,
And all things shall be well. I'll colt you once more,
And teach you to bring copper.

Per. Tell me one thing,
I do beseech thee tell me truth, wife;
However, I forgive thee; art thou honest?
The beldam swore——

Estif. I bid her tell you so, sir,
It was my plot; alas, my credulous husband;
The lady told you too——

Per. Most strange things of thee.

Estif. Still 'twas my way, and all to try your suf-
And she denied the house? [ference?

Per. She knew me not,
No, nor title that I had.

Estif. 'Twas well carried;
No more, I'm right and straight.

Per. I would believe thee,
But, Heaven knows, how my heart is; will ye follow

Estif. I'll be there straight. [me?

Per. I'm fool'd, yet dare not find it. [*Exit Perez.*

Estif. Go, silly fool; thou may'st be a good soldier
In open fields, but for our private service
Thou art an ass. "I'll make thee so or miss else."

Enter CACAFOGO.

Here comes another trout that I must tickle,
And tickle daintily, I've lost my end else.

May I crave your leave, sir? [leave.

Caca. Pr'ythee be answer'd, thou shalt crave no
I'm in my meditations, do not vex me,
A beaten thing, but this hour a most bruise'd thing,
That people had compassion on, "it look'd so:
"The next Sir Palmerin. Here's fine proportion!
"An ass, and then an elephant. Sweet justice!
"There's no way left to come at her now, no craving,
"If money could come near, yet I would pay him;"
I have a mind to make him a huge cuckold;
And money may do much; a thousand ducats!
'Tis but the letting blood of a rank heir.

Estif. Pray you hear me.

Caca. I know thou hast some wedding-ring to
pawn now,
Of silver gilt, with a blind posy in't:
"Love and a mill-horse should go round together:"
Or thy child's whistle, or thy squirrel's chain.
I'll none of 'em. I would she did but know me.
Or would this fellow had but use of money,
That I might come in any way.

Estif. I'm gone, sir;
And I shall tell the beauty sent me to ye;
The lady Margaritta——

Caca. Stay, I pr'ythee.
What is thy will? I turn me wholly to ye;
And talk now till thy tongue ake, I will hear ye.

Estif. She would intreat you, sir.

Caca. She shall command, sir;
Let it be so; I beseech thee, my sweet gentlewoman,
Do not forget thyself.

Estif. She does command then
This courtesy, because she knows you're noble.

Caca. Your mistress by the way?

Estif. My natural mistress.

Upon these jewels, sir, they're fair and rich,
And view 'em right.

Caca. To doubt 'em is an heresy.

Estif. A thousand ducats; 'tis upon necessity
Of present use; her husband, sir, is stubborn.

Caca. Long may he be so.

Estif. She desires withal

A better knowledge of your parts and person,
And when you please to do her so much honour——

Caca. Come, let's dispatch.

Estif. In truth I've heard her say, sir,
Of a fat man she has not seen a sweeter.
But in this business, sir.

Caca. Let's do it first,
And then dispute; the lady's use may long for't.

Estif. All secrecy she would desire. She told me
How wise you are.

Caca. We are not wise to talk thus.
Carry her the gold, I'll look her out a jewel
Shall sparkle like her eyes, and thee another.
Come, pr'ythee come, I long to serve the lady;
Long monstrously. Now, valour, I shall meet ye,
You that dare dukes.

“ *Estif.* Green goose, you are now in sippets.”

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*A Chamber. Enter the Duke, SANCHIO, JUAN, and
ALONZO.*

Duke. He shall not have his will, I shall prevent
I have a toy here that will turn the tide, {him.
And suddenly and strangely. Here, Don Juan,
Do you present it to him.

Juan. I am commanded. [*Exit.*]

Duke. A fellow founded out of charity,
“ And moulded to the height, contemn his maker,
“ Curb the free hand that made him!”
It must not be.

San. That such an oyster-shell should hold a pearl,
And of so rare a price, in prison!
“ Was she made to be the matter of her own undoing,
“ To let a slovenly unwieldy fellow,
“ Unruly and self-will'd, dispose her beauties?
“ We suffer all, sir, in this sad eclipse;
“ She should shine where she might show like herself,
“ An absolute sweetness, to comfort those admire her,

" And shed her beams upon her friends.
" We are gull'd all,
" And all the world will grumble at your patience,
" If she be ravish'd thus."

Duke. Ne'er fear it, Sanchio;
We'll have her free again, and move at court
In her clear orb. But one sweet handsomeness
To bless this part of Spain, and have that slubber'd!

Alon. 'Tis every good man's cause, and we must
stir in it.

Duke. I'll warrant ye, he shall be glad to please us,
" And glad to share too; we shall hear anon
" A new song from him; let's attend a little."

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Another Chamber. Enter LEON and JUAN with a Commission.

Leon. Col'nel, I am bound to you for this nobleness.

I should have been your officer, tis true, sir;
And a proud man I should have been to 've serv'd you.
'T has pleas'd the king, out of his boundless favours,
To make me your companion: this commission
Gives me a troop of horse.

Juan. I do rejoice at it,
And am a glad man we shall gain your company.
I'm sure the king knows you are newly married,
And out of that respect gives you more time, sir.

Leon. Within four days I'm gone, so he commands
And 'tis not mannerly for me to argue it. [me,
The time grows shorter still—Are your goods ready!

Juan. They are aboard.

Leon. Who waits there?

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir.

Leon. Do you hear, ho? Go carry this unto your
mistress, sir,

And let her see how much the king has honour'd me;
Bid her be lusty; she must make a soldier.
Go, take down all the hangings,

And pack up all my clothes, my plate and jewels,
And all the furniture that's portable.

Sir, when we lie in garrison, 'tis necessary
We keep a handsome port, for the kings honour.
And, do you hear? let all your lady's wardrobe
Be safely placed in trunks; they must along too.

Serv. Whither must they go?

Leon. To the wars, Lorenzo.

Serv. Must my mistress go, sir?

Leon. Ay, your mistress, and you, and all must go.
I will not leave a turnspit behind me

"That has one dram of spleen against a Dutchman:"
All must go.

Serv. Why Pedro, Vasco, Diego, come, help me,
boys. *[Exit.*

Juan. H' as taken a brave way to save his honour,
"And cross the duke; now I shall love him dearly."
By the life of credit thou'rt a noble gentleman.

Enter MARGARITTA led by two Ladies.

Leon. Why how now, wife, what, sick at my pre-
ferment?

This is not kindly done.

Mar. No sooner love ye,
Love ye entirely, sir, brought to consider
'The goodness of your mind and mine own duty,
But lose you instantly, be divorc'd from ye?
This is cruelty. I'll to the king,
And tell him 'tis unjust to part two souls,
Two minds so nearly mix'd.

Leon. By no means, sweetheart.

Mar. If he were married but four days. as I am—

Leon. He'd hang himself the fifth, or fly his coun-
try. *[Aside.*

Mar. He'd make it treason for that tongue that
But talk of war, or any thing to vex him. *[durst*
You shall not go.

Leon. Indeed I must, sweet wife.
What should I lose the king for a few kisses?
We'll have enough.

Mar. I'll to the duke, my cousin; he shall to th' king.

Leon. He did me this great office;
I thank his grace for't: should I pray him now
T' undo't again? Fie, 'twere a base discredit.

Mar. Would I were able, sir, to bear you company;
How willing should I be then, and how merry!
I will not live alone.

Leon. Be in peace, you shall not. [*Knocking within.*]

Mar. What knocking's this? Oh, Heaven, my
head! Why, rascal,
I think the wars begun i'the house already.

Leon. The preparation is, they're taking down
And packing up the hangings, plate, and jewels,
And all those furnitures that shall besit me
When I lie in garrison.

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Must the coach go too, sir?

Leon. How will your lady pass to the sea else easily?
We shall find shipping for't there to transport it.

Mar. I go? Alas!

Leon. I'll have a main care of ye:
I know you are sickly, he shall drive the easier,
And all accommodation shall attend ye.

Mar. Would I were able.

Leon. Come, I warrant ye.
Am not I with ye, sweet? Are her clothes pack'd up,
And all her linen? Give your maids direction:
You know my time's but short, and I'm commanded.

Mar. Let me have a nurse,
And all such necessary people with me;
An easy bark.

Leon. It shall not trot, I warrant ye;
Curvet it may sometimes.

Mar. I am with child, sir.

Leon. At four days warning! This is something
speedy.

Do you conceive, as our jennets do, with a west-wind?
My heir will be an errant fleet one, lady.

"I'll swear you was a maid when I first lay with ye.

" *Mar.* Pray do not swear, I thought I was a maid too

" But we may both be cozen'd in that point, sir.

" *Leon.* In such a strait point, sure I could not err, madam.

" *Juan.* This is another tenderness to try him.

" Fetch her up now."

Mar. You must provide a cradle, and what a trouble's that!

Leon. The sea shall rock it:

'Tis the best nurse; 'twill roar and rock together.

A swinging storm will sing you such a lullaby!

Mar. Faith let me stay: I shall but shame you, sir.

Leon. Ah you were a thousand shames you shall along with me:

At home I'm sure you'd prove a million.

Every man carries the bundle of his sins

Upon his back: you are mine; I'll sweat for ye.

Enter Duke, ALONZO, and SANCHIO.

Duke. What, sir, preparing for your noble journey? 'Tis well, and full of care.

I saw your mind was wedded to the war.

And knew you'd prove some good man for your country;

Therefore, fair cousin, with your gentle pardon,

I got this place. What, mourn at his advancement!

You are to blame; he'll come again, sweet cousin:

Meantime, like sad Penelope and sage,

Among your maids at home, and housewifely—

Leon. No, sir, I dare not leave her to that solitariness: She's young, and grief or ill news from those quarters, May daily cross her: she shall go along, sir.

Duke. By no means, captain.

Leon. By all means, an't please ye.

Duke. What, take a young and tender-body'd-lady, And expose her to those dangers, and those tumults! A sick lady too!

Leon. 'Twill make her well, sir; There's no such friend to health as wholesome travel.

Sun. Away, it must not be.

Alon. It ought not, sir.

Go hurry her! It is not humane, captain.

Duke. I cannot blame her tears——Fright her with tempests,

With thunder of the war?

I dare swear if she were able——

Leon. She's most able:

And, pray ye, swear not: she must go, there's no remedy:

Nor geatness, nor the trick you had to part us,
Which smells too rank, too open, too evident,
Shall hinder me. Had she but ten hours life,
Nay less, but two hours, I would have her with me;
I would not leave her fame to so much ruin,
To such a desolation and discredit, as
Her weakness and your hot will wou'd work her to.

Fie, fie, for shame!

Enter PEREZ.

What mask is this now?

More tropes and figures to abuse my suff'rance!

What cousin's this?

Juan. Michael Van Owle, how dost thou?

In what dark barn, or tod of aged ivy,

Hast thou lain hid?

Per. Things must both ebb and flow, colonel,
And people must conceal and shine again.

You're welcome hither, as your friend may say, gentlemen;

A pretty house ye see handsomely seated,
Sweet and convenient walks, the waters crystal.

Alon. He's certain mad.

Juan. As mad as a French taylor, that
Has nothing in his head but ends of fustians.

Per. I see you're packing now, my gentle cousin,
And my wife told me I should find it so;

'Tis true I do: you were merry when I was last here;

But 'twas your will to try my patience, madam.

I'm sorry that my swift occasions

Can let you take your pleasure here no longer;

Yet I would have you think, my honoured cousin,

This house, and all I have, are all your servants.

Leon. What house, what pleasure, sir? what do you mean? [teous.

Per. You hold the jest so stiff, 'twill prove discour-
This house, I mean, the pleasures of this place.

Leon. And what of them?

Per. They're mine, sir, and you know it :
My wife's, I mean, and so conferr'd upon me.
The hangings, sir, I must entreat your servants,
That are so busy in their offices,
Again to minister to their right uses.
I shall take view o' th' plate anon, and furnitures
That are of under place. You're merry still, cousin,
And of a pleasant constitution :

Men of great fortunes make their mirths *ad placitum*.

Leon. Pr'ythee, good stubborn wife, tell me directly;
Good evil wife, leave fooling, and tell me honestly,
Is this my kinsman?

Mar. I can tell ye nothing.

Leon. I've many kinsmen, but so mad a one,
And so frantic—all the house?

Per. All mine,
And all within it. I will not bate you an ace on't.
Can't you receive a noble courtesy,
And quietly and handsomely as ye ought, coz,
But you must ride o' th' top on't?

Leon. Canst thou fight?

Per. I'll tell ye presently? I could have done it, sir.

Leon. For you must law and claw before ye get it,

Juan. Away, no quarrels.

Leon. Now I am more temperate,
I'll have it prov'd you were ne'er yet in Bedlam;
Never in love, for that's a lunacy;
No great 'state left ye, that ye never look'd for,
Nor cannot manage, that's a rank distemper;
That you were christen'd, and who answered for you,
And then I yield—*Do but look at him.*

Per. He has half persuaded me I was bred i' th' moon.
I have ne'er a brush at my breech—Are not we both
mad?

And is not this a fantastic house we are in,
And all a dream we do? Will you walk out?
And if I do not beat thee presently
Into a sound belief as sense can give thee,
Brick me into the wall there for a chimney-piece,
And say, I was one o' th' Cæsars done by a seal-cutter.

Leon. I'll talk no more; come, we'll away immediately.

Mar. Why then the house is his, and all that's in it:
I'll give away my skin, but I'll undo ye:
I gave it to his wife. You must restore, sir;
And make a new provision.

Per. Am I mad now,
Or am I christen'd? You, my Pagan cousin,
My mighty Mahound kinsman, what quirk now?
You shall be welcome all. I hope to see, sir,
Your grace here, and my coz: we are all soldiers.
And must do naturally for one another.

Duke. Are you blank at this? Then I must tell ye,
Ye've no command; now you may go at pleasure, [sir,
And ride your ass troop. " 'Twas a trick I used
" To try your jealousy, upon entreaty,
" And saving of your wife."

Leon. All this not moves me,
Nor stirs my gall, nor alters my affections.
You have more furniture, more houses, lady,
And rich ones too; I will make bold with those;
And you have land i' th' Indies, as I take it;
Thither we'll go, and view a while those climates,
Visit your factors there, that may betray ye.
'Tis done, we must go.

Mar. Now thou'rt a brave gentleman;
And by this sacred light I love thee dearly. Hark ye,
The house is none of yours; I did but jest, sir; [sir,
You are no coz of mine; I beseech ye, vanish.

" I tell you plain, you have no more right than he
" Has, that senseless thing. Your wife has once more
fool'd ye, sir.

" Go ye and consider."

Leon. Good-morrow, my sweet Mahound cousin.

You are welcome—welcome all—my cousin too—

We are soldiers, and should naturally do for one ano-

Per. By this hand she dies for't, [*ther.*
Or any man that speaks for her.

"These are fine toys." [*Exit Perez.*

Mar. Let me request you stay but one poor month;
You shall have a commission, and I'll go too.
Give me but will so far.

Leon. Well, I will try ye.

Good-morrow to your grace; we've private business.

"*Duke.* If I miss thee again, I'm an errant bungler.

"*Juan.* Thou shalt have my command, and I'll

"march under thee,

"Nay, be thy boy, before thou shalt be baffled?

"Thou art so brave a fellow.

"*Alon.* I have seen visions." [*Exeunt.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

MARGARITTA's House. Enter LEON with a letter,
and MARGARITTA.

"*Leon.* COME hither, wife. Do you know this
"hand?

"*Mar.* I do, sir; 'tis Estifania's, that was once
my woman.

"*Leon.* She writes to me here, that one Cacafo,go,

"An usuring jeweller's son, I know the rascal,

"Has mortally fallen in love with you.

"*Mar.* He is a monster; deliver me from mountains.

"*Leon.* Do you go a birding for all sorts of people?

"And this evening will come to ye, and shew ye jewels,

"And offers any thing to get access to you.

"If I can make or sport or profit on him,

"(For he is fit for both) she bids me use him,

"And so I will. Be you conformable, and follow
"but my will.

"*Mar.* I shall not fail, sir.

"*Leon.* Will the duke come again, do you think?

"*Mar.* No, sure, sir.

"H'as now no policy to bring him hither.

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“ *Leon.* Nor bring you to him, if my wit hold,
“ fair wife.

“ Let's in to dinner. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Street. Enter PEREZ.

Per. Had I but lungs enough to bawl sufficiently,
That all the queans in Christendom might hear me,
That men might run away from the contagion,
I had my wish. Would it were made high treason,
Most infinite high, for any man to marry:

I mean, for a man that would live handsomely,
And like a gentleman in's wits and credit. [*now?*

What torments shall I put her to? “ *Phalaris' bull*
“ Pox! they love bulling too well, tho' they smoke
“ for't.”

Cut her in pieces, every piece will live still,
And every morsel of her will do mischief.
They have so many lives, there's no hanging of 'em;
They are too light to drown, they're cork and feathers;
To burn too cold, they live like salamanders:
Under huge heaps of stones to bury her,
And so depress her, as they did the giants,
She will move under more than built old Babel.
I must destroy her.

Enter CACAFOGO, with a casket.

Caca. Be cozen'd by a thing of clouts! a she moth,
That every silkman's shop breeds! To be cheated,
And of a thousand ducats, by a whim-wham?

Per. Who's that is cheated? Speak again, thou
vision.

But art thou cheated? Minister some comfort.
Tell me, I conjure thee, “ art thou cheated bravely?
“ Come, pr'ythee come; art thou so pure a coxcomb,
“ To be undone? Do not dissemble with me.”

Caca. Then keep thy circle:
For I'm a spirit wild that flies about thee;
And, whosoe'er thou art, if thou be'st human,
I'd let thee plainly know, I'm cheated damnably.

Per. Ha, ha, ha! [*damnably.*

Caca. Dost thou laugh? Damnably; I say, most

Per. By whom, good spirit? Speak, speak! Ha, ha, ha!

Caca. I'll utter; laugh till thy lungs crack; by a rascal woman!

"A lewd, abominable, and plain woman!"

Dost thou laugh still?

Per. I must laugh, pr'ythee pardon me,
I shall laugh terribly.

Caca. I shall be angry,
Terribly angry; I have cause.

Per. That's it;

And 'tis no reason but thou shouldst be angry,
Angry at heart: yet I must laugh still at thee.

By a woman cheated! Art sure it was a woman?

Caca. I shall break thy head; my valour itches at

Per. It is no matter. By a woman cozen'd, [thee.
A real woman!

Caca. By a real devil.
Plague of her jewels, and her copper chains,
How rank they smell.

Per. Sweet, cozen'd sir, let's see them.
I have been cheated too, I would have you note that,
And lewdly cheated, by a woman also,
A scurvy woman. I am undone, sweet sir,
Therefore I must have leave to laugh.

Caca. Pray ye take it;
You are the merriest undone man in Europe.
What need we fiddles, bawdy songs, and sherry,
When our own miseries can make us merry?

Per. Ha, ha, ha!
I've seen these jewels: what a notable pennyworth
Have you had! You will not take, sir,
Some twenty ducats—

Caca. Thou'rt deceiv'd; I will take——

"*Per.* To clear your bargain, now.

"*Caca.* I'll take some ten,"
Some any thing, half ten, half a ducat.

Per. An excellent lapidary set these stones, sure:
D'ye mark their waters?

Caca. Quicksands choak their waters,
And her's that brought them too: but I shall find her.

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Per. And so shall I, I hope: but do not hurt her,
“ If you had need of cozening, as you may have,
“ (For such gross natures will desire it often,
“ 'Tis, at sometimes too, a fine variety)”

You cannot find in all this kingdom,
A woman that can cozen ye so neatly.
She has taken half mine anger off with this trick. [*Exit.*

Caca. If I were valiant now, I'd kill this fellow.
I've money enough lies by me, at a pinch,
To pay for twenty rascals lives that vex me.
I'll to this lady; there I shall be satisfied. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A Street. Enter PEREZ and ESTIFANIA, meeting:

Per. Why, how dar'st thou meet me again, thou
rebel, [rascal?

And know'st how thou hast us'd me thrice, thou
Were there not ways enough to fly my vengeance,
No holes nor vaults to hide thee from my fury,
But thou must meet me face to face to kill thee?
I would not seek thee to destroy thee willingly,
But now thou com'st t' invite me, com'st upon me.
How like a sheep-biting rogue, taken i' the manner,
And ready for a halter, dost thou look now:
Thou hast a hanging look, thou scurvy thing?
Hast ne'er a knife,
Nor e'er a string to lead thee to Elysium?
Be there no pitiful 'pothecaries in this town,
That have compassion upon wretched women,
That dare administer a dram of ratsbane,
But thou must fall to me?

Estif. I know you've mercy.

Per. If I had tons of mercy thou deserv'st none.
What new tricks now a-foot, and what new houses
Have you i' the air? What orchards in apparition?
What canst thou say for thy life?

Estif. Little or nothing.

I know you'll kill me, and I know 'tis useless
To beg for mercy. Pray let me draw my book out,
And pray a little.

Per. Do, a very little:

For I have farther business than thy killing.

I have money yet to borrow. Speak when you're ready.

Estif. Now, now, sir, now, [*Shows a pistol.*]

Come on. Do you start off from me?

Do you sweat, great captain? Have you seen a spirit?

Per. Do you wear guns;

Estif. I am a soldier's wife, sir,

And by that privilege I may be arm'd.

Now, what's the news? And let's discourse more friendly,

And talk of our affairs in peace.

Per. Let me see,

Pr'ythee let me see thy gun; 'tis a very pretty one.

Estif. No, no, sir, you shall feel.

Per. Hold, hold, ye villain! what would you kill your own husband?

Estif. Let mine own husband then,

Be in's own wits. There, there's a thousand ducats.

Who must provide for you? And yet you'll kill me.

Per. I will not hurt thee for ten thousand millions.

Estif. When will you redeem your jewels? I have pawn'd 'em,

You see for what we must keep touch.

Per. I'll kiss thee;

And get as many more, I'll make thee famous.

Had we the house now!

Estif. Come along with me;

If that be vanish'd, there be more to hire, sir.

Per. I see I am an ass when thou art near me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

A Chamber. Enter LEON and MARGARITTA.

Leon. Come, we'll away unto your country house,
And there we'll learn to live contentedly.

This place is full of charge, and full of hurry;
No part of sweetness dwells about these cities.

Mar. Whither you will, I wait upon your pleasure:
Live in a hollow tree, sir, I'll live with ye.

Leon. Ay, now you strike a harmony, a true one,

When your obedience waits upon your husband.

Why, now I doat upon you, love ye dearly ;

And my rough nature falls, like roaring streams,

Clearly and sweetly into your embraces.

Oh, what a jewel is a woman excellent,

A wise, a virtuous, and a noble woman !

“ When we meet such, we bear our stamps on both
“ sides,

“ And through the world we hold our current virtues.

“ Alone we are single medals, only faces,

“ And wear our fortunes out in useless shadows.”

Command you now, and ease me of that trouble,

I'll be as humble to you as a servant.

Bid whom you please, invite your noble friends,

They shall be welcome all, now experience

Has bound you fast unto the chain of goodness.

[Clashing swords, a cry within.] Down with their

What noise is this? what dismal cry? [swords !

Mar. 'Tis loud too.

Sure there's some mischief done i' the street; look
out there.

Leon. Look out, and help.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Oh, sir, the duke Medina——

Leon. What of the duke Medina?

Serv. Oh, sweet gentleman, is almost slain!

Mar. Away, away, and help him ;

All the house help. [Exit Servant.

Leon. How! slain? Why, Margarita,

Wife, sure some new device they have a-foot again,

Some trick upon my credit ; I shall meet it.

I'd rather guide a ship imperial,

Alone, and in a storm, than rule one woman.

Enter Duke, SANCHIO, ALONZO, and Servant.

Mar. How came you hurt, sir?

Duke. I fell out with my friend, the noble colonel.

My cause was naught, for 'twas about your honour ;

And he that wrongs the innocent ne'er prospers,

‘ And he has left me thus ;’ for charity,

Lend me a bed to ease my tortur'd body,
That ere I perish I may shew my penitence.
I fear I'm slain.

Leon. Help, gentlemen, to carry him.
There shall be nothing in this house, my lord,
But as your own.

Duke. I thank ye, noble sir.

Leon. To bed with him; and, wife, give your attendance.

[*Exeunt Duke, San. Alon. Marg. and Servant.*
Enter JUAN.

Leon. Afore me,
'Tis rarely counterfeited.

Juan. True, it is so, sir!

“ And take you heed this last blow do not spoil ye.”
He is not hurt, only we made a scuffle,
As tho' we purpos'd anger: that same ratch,
On's hand, he took, to colour all, and draw compassion,
That he might get into your house more cunningly.
I must not stay; stand now, and you're a brave fellow.

Leon. I thank ye, noble colonel, and I honour ye.
Never be quiet! [Exit Juan.]

Enter MARGARITTA.

Mar. He's most desperate ill, sir!
I do not think these ten months will recover him.

Leon. Does he hire my house to play the fool in,
Or does it stand on fairy ground? We're haunted.
Are all men and their wives troubled with dreams thus?

Mar. What ail you, sir?

Leon. Nay, what ail you, sweet wife,
To put these daily pastimes on my patience?
What dost thou see in me, that I should suffer this?
“ Have I not done my part like a true husband,
“ And paid some desperate debts you never look'd
“ for?

“ *Mar.* You have done handsomely, I must confess, sir.

“ *Leon.* Have I not kept thee waking like a hawk,
“ And watch'd thee with delights, to satisfy thee,
“ The very tithes of which had won a widow?”

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Mar. Alas, I pity ye.

Leon. Thou'lt make me angry;
Thou never saw'st me mad yet.

Mar. You are always;
You carry a kind of bedlam still about ye.

Leon. If thou pursu'st me farther, I run stark mad,
If you have more hurt dukes, or gentlemen,
To lie here on your cure, I shall be desperate.
I know the trick, and you shall feel I know it.
Are ye so hot that no hedge can contain ye?
I'll have thee let blood in all the veins about thee;
I'll have thy thoughts found too, and have them open'd,
Thy spirits purg'd, for those are they that fire ye.
The maid shall be thy mistress, thou the maid,
And all her servile labours thou shalt reach at,
And go through cheerfully, or else sleep empty,
That maid shall lie by me, to teach you duty;
You in a pallet by, to humble ye,
And grieve for what you lose, *thou foolish, wicked woman.*

Mar. I've lost myself, sir,
And all that was my base self, disobedience: [*Kneels.*
My wantonness, my stubbornness I've lost too.
And now, by that pure faith, good wives are crown'd
with,

By your own nobleness——

Leon. *Beware, beware——have you no fetch now?*

Mar. *No, by my repentance, no.*

Leon. *And art thou truly, truly honest?*

Mar. *These tears will shew it.*

Leon. I take you up, and wear you next my heart:
See you be worth it.——

Enter ALTEA.

Now, what with you?

Alt. I come to tell my lady,
There is a fulsome fellow would fain speak with her.

Leon. 'Tis Cacafoغو; keep him from the duke,
'The duke from him; anon he'll yield us laughter.

Alt. *Where is it, please, that we shall detain him?*
He seems at war with reason, full of wine.

Leon. *To the cellar with him; 'tis the drunkard's den,
Fit cover for such beasts. Should he be resty,
Say I'm at home; unwieldy as he his,
He'll creep into an augre hole to shun me.*

Alt. *I'll dispose him there.* [Exit.

Leon. Now, Margaritta, comes your trial on:
The duke expects you; acquit yourself to him;
I put you to the test; you have my trust,
My confidence, my love.

Mar. I will deserve 'em. [Exit.

Leon. *My work is done, and now my heart's at ease.
I read in ev'ry look, she means me fairly;
And nobly shall my love reward her for't.
He who betrays his rights, the husband's rights,
To pride and wantonness; or who denies
Affection to the heart he has subdu'd,
Forfeits his claim to manhood and humanity.* [Exit.

*SCENE V.

A Chamber. Duke discovered in a night-gown.

Duke. Why, now this is most excellent invention;
I shall succeed, spite of this huffing husband.
I can but smile to think most wary spouses
The soonest are deceiv'd.

Enter MARGARITTA.

Who's there? My love?

Mar. 'Tis I my lord,

Duke. Are you alone, sweet friend?

Mar. Alone, and come to enquire how your
wounds are.

Duke. I have none, lady; not a hurt about me.
My damages I did but counterfeit,
And feign'd the quarrel to enjoy you, lady.
I am as lusty and as full of health,
As high in blood——

Mar. As low in blood, you mean:
Dishonest thoughts debase the greatest birth;

* This scene is entirely altered for representation: as there was no possibility of distinguishing the variations from the original, it was thought necessary to omit it, in order to prevent confusion.

The man that acts unworthily, tho' ennobled,
Sullies his honour.

Duke. Nay, nay, my Margaritta;
Come to my couch, and there let's lisp love's language.

Mar. Would you take that which I've no right to
give?

Steal wedlock's property; and in his house,
Beneath the roof of him that entertains you,
Would you his wife betray?—Will you become
Th' ungrateful viper, who, restor'd to life,
Venom'd the breast which sav'd him?

Duke. Leave these dull thoughts to mortifying pen-
nance;

Let us, while love is lusty, prove its power.

Mar. Ill wishes once, my lord, my mind debas'd:
You found my weakness, wanted to ensnare it:
Shameful, I own my fault, but 'tis repented.

No more the wanton Margaritta now,
But the chaste wife of Leon, His great merit,
His manly tenderness, his noble nature,
Commands from me affection in return,
Pure as esteem can offer. He has won me;
I owe him all my heart.

Duke. Indeed, fair lady,
This jesting well becomes a sprightly beauty.
Love prompts to celebrate sublimer rights.
No more mementos; let me press you to me,
And stifle with my kisses—

Mar. Nay, then, within there!

Enter LEON, JUAN, ALONZO, and SANCHIO.

Leon. Did you call, my wife; or you, my lord?
Was it your grace that wanted me?—No answer!
How do you, my good lord; What, out of bed!
Methinks you look but poorly on this matter.
Has my wife wounded you? You were well before.

Duke. More hurt than ever; spare your reproach;
I feel too much already.

Leon. I see it, sir—And now your grace shall know,
I can as readily pardon as revenge.
Be comforted; all is forgotten.

Duke. *I thank you, sir.*

Leon. Wife, you are a right one;

And now, with unknown nations I dare trust ye.

Juan. No more feign'd fights, my lord, they never prosper.

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Please you, sir,

We cannot keep this gross fat man in order:

He swears he'll have admittance to my lady,

And reels about and clamours most outrageously.

Leon. *Let him come up—Wife, here's another suitor*
We forgot; he's been sighing in the cellar,
Making my casks his mistresses.

Will your grace permit us to produce a rival?

Duke. *No more on that theme, I request, Don Leon.*

Leon. Here comes the porpus; he's devilish drunk.
Let me stand by.

Enter CACAFOGO drunk.

Caca. *Where is my bona roba? Oh, you're all here.*
Why, I don't fear snap-dragons—Impotential, power-
fully potion'd—I can drink with Hector, and beat him
too. Then what care I for captains; I'm full of Greek
wine; the true ancient courage.—Sweet Mrs. Marga-
ritta, let me kiss thee.—Your kisses shall pay me for
his kicking.

Leon. *What would you?*

Caca. *Sir!*

Leon. *Lead off the wretch.*

Duke. *Most filthy figure truly.*

Caca. *Filthy! Oh, you're a prince; yet I can buy*
all of you, your wives and all.

Juan. *Sleep, and be silent.*

[*Half pay;*

Caca. *Speak you to your creditors, good Captain*
I'll not take thy pawn in.

Leon. *Which of the butts is thy mistress?*

Caca. *Butt in thy belly.*

Leon. *There are two in thine, I'm sure, it is grown*
so monstrous.

Caca. *Butt in thy face.*

Leon. *Go, carry him to sleep;* [*Exit Caca.*]

When he is sober, let him out to rail,
Or hang himself; there will be no loss of him.

Enter PEREZ and ESTIFANIA.

Leon. Who's this? my Mahound cousin?

Per. Good sir, 'tis very good: wou'd I'd a house
For there's no talking in the open air. [too,

You have a pretty seat, you have the luck on't,

A pretty lady too, I have miss'd both;

My carpenter built in a mist, I thank him.

Do me the courtesy to let me see it,

See it once more. But I shall cry for anger.

I'll hire a chandler's shop close under ye,

And for my foolery sell soap and whip cord.

Nay, if you do not laugh now, and laugh heartily,

You are a fool, coz.

Leon. I must laugh a little;

And now I've done. Coz, thou shalt live with me,

My merry coz, the world shall not divorce us:

Thou art a valiant man, and thou shalt never want.

Will this content thee?

Per. I'll cry, and then be thankful,

Indeed I will, and I'll be honest to ye;

I'd live a swallow here, I must confess.

Wife, I forgive thee all if thou be honest,

And at thy peril, I believe thee excellent.

Estif. If I prove otherwise, let me beg first.

Mar. Hold, this is yours, some recompence for service,

Use it to nobler ends than he that gave it.

Duke. And this is yours, your true commission, sir.

Now you're a captain.

Leon. You're a noble prince, sir;

And now a soldier.

Juan. Sir, I shall wait upon you through all fortunes.

Alon. And I.

Alt. And I must needs attend my mistress.

Leon. Will you go, sister?

Alt. Yes, indeed, good brother:

I have two ties, mine own blood, and my mistress.

Mar. Is she your sister?

Leon. Yes, indeed, good wife,
And my best sister, for she prov'd so, wench,
When she deceiv'd you with a loving husband.

Alt. I would not deal so truly for a stranger.

Mar. Well, I could chide ye, but it must be lovingly,
And like a sister.

I'll bring you on your way, and feast ye nobly,
For now I have an honest heart to love ye.
And then deliver you to the blue Neptune.

Juan. Your colours you must wear, and wear 'em
proudly,
Wear 'em before the bullet, and in blood too.
And all the world shall know we're virtue's servants.

Duke. And all the world shall know, a noble mind
Makes women beautiful, and envy blind.

Leon. All you who mean to lead a happy life,
First learn to rule and then to have a wife.

EPILOGUE.

GOOD night, our worthy friends, and may you part
Each with as merry and as free a heart
As you came hither. To those noble eyes,
That deign to smile on our poor faculties,
And give a blessing to our labouring ends,
As we hope many to such fortune sends
Their own desires, wives fair as light, as chaste:
To those that live by spite, wives made in haste.

THE END.





COMEDY
OF THE
WAY TO KEEP HIM,
BY ARTHUR MURPHY, ESQ.

ADAPTED FOR THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

As performed at the
THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

Regulated from the Prompt Book,

BY PERMISSION OF THE MANAGER.

WITH A CRITIQUE,

By R. CUMBERLAND, Esq.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted
in the Representation.

Cooke's Edition.



SUPERBLY EMBELLISHED.

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TO
MRS. ABINGTON.

MADAM,

YOU will be surprised, at this distance of time, and in this public manner, to receive an answer to a very polite letter, which you addressed to me in the course of the last summer at Yarmouth. In a strain of vivacity, which always belongs to you, you invite me to write again for the Stage. You tell me, that having gone through the Comedies of the *The Way to Keep Him*, *All in the Wrong*, and *Three Weeks after Marriage*, you now want more from the same hand. I am not bound, you say, by my resolution, signified in a Prologue about ten years ago, to take my leave of the Dramatic Muse. At the perjuries of poets, as well as lovers, Jove laughs; and the public, you think, will be ready to give me a general release from the promise. All this is very flattering. If the following Scenes, at the end of five and twenty years, still continue to be a part of the public amusement, I know to what cause I am to ascribe it. Those graces of action, with which you adorn whatever you undertake, have given to the Piece a degree of brilliancy, and even novelty, as often as you have repeated it. I am not unmindful of the Performers who first obtained for the Author the favour of the Town; a GARRICK, a YATES, a CIBBER, united their abilities; and who can forget Mrs. CLIVE? They have all passed away, and the Comedy might have passed with them, if you had not so frequently placed it in a conspicuous light.

The truth is, without such talents as yours, all that the Poet writes is a dead letter. He designs for representation; but it is the Performer that gives to the draught, however justly traced, a form, a spirit, a countenance, and a mind. All this you have done for the WIDOW BELLMOUR; and that excellence in your art, which you are known to possess, can, no doubt, lend the same animation to any new character. But alas! I have none to offer. That *tinder in the Poet's mind*, which, as Doctor YOUNG says, *takes fire from every spark*, I have not found, even though you have endeavoured to kindle the flame. Could I write, as you can act, I should be proud to obey your commands: but after a long disuse, how shall I recover the train of thinking necessary for plot, humour, incident, and character?

In the place of novelty, permit me to request that *The Way to Keep Him* may be inscribed to you. You are entitled to it, Madam; for your talents have made the Play your own. A Dedication, I grant, at this period of time, comes rather late; but being called upon for a new edition, I have retouched the dialogue, and perhaps so reformed the whole, that, in its present state, it may be deemed less unworthy of your acceptance. It is, therefore, my wish, that this Address may in future attend the Comedy, to remain (as long as such a thing can remain) a tribute due to the GENIUS OF MRS. ABRINGTON, and a mark of that esteem, with which I subscribe myself,

Madam,

Your real admirer,

And most obedient Servant,

ARTHUR MURPHY.

CRITIQUE

ON

THE WAY TO KEEP HIM.

I EMBRACE the opportunity of reviewing this comedy with particular satisfaction, as it justifies me in paying that tribute to the genius of its author, which, in the instance of his play, intitled, *All in the Wreng*, I found myself obliged to withhold.

In the plot of this comedy we are presented with a series of incidents, ingeniously contriv'd, first to expose, and afterwards to reform, Lovemore and Sir Bashful Constant, two married men; who, from very opposite causes, render themselves and their wives completely discontented and unhappy.

Lovemore, who is a dissipated libertine, flies the society of a virtuous woman, who sighs for domestic tranquillity, and by wearying him with her complaints, forfeits all that influence, which her merits mental and personal, would otherwise command. Disgusted with her remonstrances, he treats her with the most mortifying neglect, which he renders not the less cruel by glossing it over with some affected show of mock civility. Mrs. Lovemore discovers him in the act of paying his addresses to the widow Bellmour in the counterfeited character of a certain Lord Etheridge, who has no part in the play. He is also defeated in his attempt to obtain an assignation with Lady Constant, by a trick which he puts upon her husband, who considers him as his friend, and confides his secrets to him.

In the mean time Mrs. Lovemore having imparted her unhappy situation to the widow Bellmour, is persuaded to abstain from her complaints, and by assuming a greater conformity to the levity of her husband's manners, to make his home more agreeable to him. In the concluding act she follows this advice,

and by the success of the experiment is convinced, that she has struck upon the *Way to Keep Him*. The play then winds up with a remark, that "the ladies should learn, after the marriage-rites are performed, not to suffer their powers of pleasing to languish away, but still remember to sacrifice to the Graces."

The morality of this is not correct, but there is worldly wisdom in it as a maxim.

The description that is given of the matrimonial disquietude of Sir Bashful Constant, is of a more novel, comic, and amusing cast. This silly gentleman is doatingly enamoured of his wife's fair person, and prides himself in the high company that she keeps, and the expensive pleasures that she engages in; but the dread of being exposed to ridicule, if he should be found guilty of so gross an absurdity as that of being in love with his own wife, haunts him with such terrors, that to conceal his fondness, he assumes a churlish character, and is perpetually reproaching her for those very gaieties which he admires, and for that extravagance which he secretly contrives to encourage and supply.

This whimsical character is very happily conceived, and gives life and spirit to some admirable situations, particularly in the two first acts. The vacillations of his mind, the shifts he is reduced to for concealment of his raptures, his hair-breadth escapes from discovery, and his ridiculous embarrassments, whilst keeping up a shew of discontent and anger, are truly comic. His scene with Lovemore in the second act is extremely entertaining, and the interruptions on the part of Sir Brilliant Fashion are thrown in with great art, as they are not only necessary breaks to relieve the length of it, but by obliging him to postpone the discovery of the grand and notable secret, which he has to disclose to Lovemore, they become very useful instruments to heighten the importance of an incident which is in effect the most striking feature in the plot and composition of the drama. At length, when he

makes Lovemore "the depository, the faithful depository of his secret," and the long-postponed confession of his uxorious passion is made, with all the accompaniments of confusion and dismay, with which the poet has ingeniously contrived to set it off, the part of Sir Bashful is brought so pre-eminently forward in this scene, that there must be a sensible falling off in the succeeding acts; and it is judiciously managed, that the introduction of the widow Bellmour should be held back till the opening of the third act, when her appearance gives that seasonable support to the spirit of the comedy, which Sir Bashful, as far as his character is concerned, could not else have kept up in its first vigour.

Although this character of the widow Bellmour is more properly an auxiliary than a principal in the plot, yet the author has evidently bestowed such pains upon it, as cannot fail to recommend it to the attention of the critic. This part has been the favourite of the favourites of the stage, and repeatedly given display to the distinguished talents of Mrs. Abington and Miss Farren. My concern is with the character itself; for them, as the representatives of it, I have all possible respect; but I am the drama's reviewer, not theirs. The widow Bellmour is certainly a part well calculated to set off the finesse and graces of a spirited and accomplished actress. She is not decidedly a lady of fashion, nor altogether a woman of sentiment; yet she has her gay fits and her grave ones, and either trifles or declaims as opportunity offers, and the humour seizes her. She has as much coquetry as justifies a libertine like Lovemore, and a coxcomb like Sir Brilliant Fashion in making their attacks upon her; and if the former could have preserved his incognito, it is not quite certain, upon her own authority, in what degree he might have succeeded. There is a pretty kind of affected hesitation in her opinion upon this point; for the lady is no heroine in the company of her waiting-woman, who is upon the most easy terms with her mistress, and fairly says to her—

“ If I have any skill, ma'am, you are not without a little partiality for his lordship.” To this she replies—
“ Really! Then you think I like him, perhaps. Do you think I like him? I don't well know how that is. Like him! no, not absolutely; it is not decided: and yet I don't know, if I had a mind to humour myself, and to give way a little to inclination, there is something here, in my heart, that would be busy, I believe. This is great affability on the part of the lady; yet I much doubt if it is in character; for I liv'd in the time when this play was written, and am inclined to think, it was not the custom for women of fashion and reputation to hold such language with their servants. Yet it is somewhat stronger at the close of their discourse; when her servant familiarly observes—“ You have it through the very heart of you; I see that.” To which she replies—“ Do you? I don't know what to say to it. Poor Sir Brilliant Fashion! if I prefer his rival, what will become of him?—I won't think about it.” I must think, that in these passages, both the sentiments, and the person they are addressed to, are degrading to the character from whom they proceed; but I perceive this part of the waiting-woman was given to an actress of high pretensions; and when authors decree such casts beforehand, they write to the talents of a performer, and sacrifice propriety to purchase support.

What object Lovemore could have in view by so shallow a project as that of passing himself off upon the widow as Lord Etheridge, I cannot understand. He could not propose to go the length of marrying her; and there seems no other point in which it could serve his purpose, for as a gallant Lovemore stood as good a chance with a woman of intrigue as my lord. It was a disguise that exposed him every moment to a most disgraceful discovery; for his ribband and star were a masquerading trick, that could not well be practised even upon an ignorant and obscure person above once; and Mrs. Bellmour is described as a woman of the world.

Though there is spirit, and some point, in the writing of this part, and though it forms upon the whole what the players style a good acting character, I think the dialogue in her interview with Mrs. Lovemore is loaded, and the speeches too long. In short, the lady is too talkative both in her lessons to Mrs. Lovemore, and her conversation with the counterfeit Lord Etheridge. In representation, I can readily believe, all is well, but with representation I have nothing to do.

Sir Brilliant Fashion is a coxcomb of the school of Cibber; a character which Comedy enrolls in her troop as the ready-made rake of the stage, stored with sufficient self-conceit to play the bully, the coward, or the buffoon, as suits the writer's purpose; and if the first sketch was ever drawn after the model of a man of fashion, it must have been in times when a man of fashion did not even affect the manners or principles of a gentleman. Upon characters of this cast criticism will hardly condescend to pause.

In the plan and disposition of this comedy, the author has displayed great ingenuity, and a degree of judgment that marks an accurate acquaintance with stage-effect. Of the characters I have spoken pretty much at large; in point of diction it provokes no censure, and holds a middle rank—

“ Behind the foremost, and before the last.”

R. CUMBERLAND.





PROLOGUE.

*WHEN first the haughty critic's dreadful rage,
With Gothic fury, over-ran the stage,
Then Prologues rose, and strove with varied art
To gain the soft accesses to the heart.
Thro' all the tuneful tribe th' infection flew,
And each Great Genius—his petition drew;
In form'd pauperis address'd the Pit,
With all the gay antithesis of wit.
Their sacred art poor poets own'd a crime;
They sigh'd in simile, they bow'd in rhyme.
For charity they all were forc'd to beg;
And every Prologue was "a wooden leg."*

*Next these a hardy, manly race appear'd,
Who knew no dulness, and no critics fear'd.
From Nature's store each curious tint they drew,
Then boldly held the piece to public view:
"Lo! here, exact proportion! just design!
"The bold relief! and the unerring line!
"Mark in soft union how the colours strike!
"This, Sirs, you will, or this you ought to like."
They bid defiance to the foes of wit,
"Scatter'd like ratsbane up and down the Pit."*

*Such Prologues were of yore;—our bard to-night
Disdains a false compassion to excite;*

*Nor too secure your judgment would oppose ;
He packs no jury, AND HE DREADS NO FOES.
To govern here no party can expect ;
An audience will preserve its own respect.*

*To catch the foibles, that misguide the fair,
From trifles spring, and end in lasting care,
Our author aims ; nor this alone he tries,
But as fresh objects, and new manners rise,
He bids his canvas glow with various dyes ;
Where sense and folly mix in dubious strife,
Alternate rise, and struggle into life.
Judge if with art the mimic strokes he blend ;
If amicably light and shade contend ;
The mental features if he trace with skill ;
See the Piece first, then damn it if you will.*



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LOVEMORE.

Sir BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir BRILLIANT FASHION.

WILLIAM, *Servant to Lovemore.*

SIDEBOARD, *Servant to Sir Bashful.*

POMPEY, *a black Servant.*

JOHN.

Mrs. LOVEMORE.

The Widow BELLMOUR.

Lady CONSTANT.

MUSLIN, *Maid to Mrs. Lovemore.*

MIGNIONET, *Maid to Mrs. Bellmour.*

FURNISH, *Maid to Lady Constant.*

Scene, LONDON.



THE WAY TO KEEP HIM.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An Apartment in LOVEMORE'S House. WILLIAM and SIDEBORD discovered at a Game of Cards.

William. A PLAGUE go with it! I have turned out my game: Is forty-seven good?

Side. Equal.

Will. Confound the cards! tierce to a queen?

Side. Equal.

Will. There again! ruined, stock and block: nothing can save me. I don't believe there is a footman in England plays with worse luck than myself. Four aces are fourteen.

Side. That's hard, cruel by Jupiter! Aces against me every time.

Will. Four aces are fourteen: fifteen. [Plays.]

Side. There's your equality.

Will. Very well: I turned out my point. Sixteen; [Plays.] seventeen. [Plays.]

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. There's a couple of you, indeed! You are so fond of the vices of your betters, that you are scarce out of your beds, but you must imitate them and their profligate ways. Set you up forsooth!

Will. Prythee be quiet, woman, do. Eighteen.

[Plays.]

Mus. Upon my word!—With your usual ease, Mr. Coxcomb.

Will. Manners, Mrs. Muslin: you see Mr. Sideboard here: he is just come on a message from Sir

Bashful Constant. Have some respect for a stranger.
Nineteen, clubs. [Plays.

Mus. It would become Mr. Sideboard to go back with his answer, and it would become you to send my lady word—

Will. Command your tongue, Mrs. Muslin: you'll put me out. What shall I play!—He will go back with his answer in good time. Let his master wait till it suits our conveniency. Nineteen, clubs: where shall I go now?

Mus. Have done with your folly, Mr. Impertinent. My lady desires to know—

Will. I tell you, woman, my master and I desire to have nothing to do with you and your lady. Twenty, diamonds. [Plays.

Mus. But I tell you, Mr. Brazen, that my lady desires to know at what hour your master came home last night, and how he does this morning.

Will. Ridiculous! Don't disturb us with that nonsense now; you see I am not at leisure. I and my master are resolved to be teased no more by you; and so, Mrs. Go-between, you may return as you came.—What the devil shall I play?—We will have nothing to do with you, I tell you.

Mus. You'll have nothing to do with us! But you shall have to do with us, or I'll know the reason why. [She snatches the cards from him, and throws them about.]

Will. Death and fury! this meddling woman has destroyed my whole game. A man might as well be married, as be treated in this fashion.

Side. I shall score you for this, Mr. William: I was sure of the cards, and that would have made me up.

Will. No, you'll score nothing for this. You win too much of me. I am a very pretty annuity to you.

Side. Annuity, say you? I lose a fortune to you in the course of the year. How could you, Mrs. Muslin, behave in this sort to persons of our dignity?

Mus. Decamp with your dignity; take your answer

to your master: turn upon your rogue's heel, and rid the house.

Side. I shan't dispute with you. I hate wrangling: I leave that to lawyers and married people; they have nothing else to do. Mr. William, I shall let Sir Bashful know that Mr. Lovemore will be at home for him. When you come to our house, I'll give you your revenge. We can have a snug party there, and I promise you a glass of choice champagne: it happens to be a good batch; Sir Bashful gets none of it: I keep it for my own friends. *Au revoir.*

[*Exit.*]

Will. [*To Muslin.*] You see what mischief you have made.

Mus. Truce with your foolery; and now sir, be so obliging as to send my lady an answer to her questions: How and when your rakehelly master came home last night?

Will. I'll tell you one thing, Mrs. Muslin; you and my master will be the death of me at last. In the name of charity what do you both take me for? Whatever appearances may be, I am but of mortal mould; nothing supernatural about me.

Mus. Upon my word, Mr. Powder-Puff!

Will. I have not, indeed; and flesh and blood, let me tell you, can't hold it always at this rate. I can't be for ever a slave to Mr. Lovemore's eternal frolics, and to your second-hand airs.

Mus. Second-hand airs!

Will. Yes, second-hand airs; you take them at your ladies' toilets with their cast gowns, and so you descend to us with them.—And then on the other hand, there's my master! Because he chooses to live upon the principal of his health, and so run out his whole stock as fast as he can, he must have my company with him in his devil's dance to the other world! Never at home till three, four, five, six in the morning.

Mus. Ay, a vile ungrateful man! always ranging abroad, and no regard for a wife that dotes upon him.

And your love for me is all of a piece. I have no patience with you both; a couple of false, perfidious, abandoned profligates!

Will. Hey! where is your tongue running? My master, as the world goes, is a good sort of a civil kind of a husband; and I, heaven help me! a poor simpleton of a constant, amorous puppy, who bears with all the whims of my little tyrant here. Come and kiss me, you jade, come and kiss me.

Mus. Paws off, Cæsar. Don't think to make me your dupe. I know when you go with him to this new lady, this Bath acquaintance; and I know you are as false as my master, and give all my dues to your Mrs. Mignonet there.

Will. Hush; not a word of that. I am ruined, pressed, and sent on board a tender directly, if you blab that I trusted you with that secret——But to charge me with falsehood!—injustice and ingratitude!——My master, to be sure, does drink an agreeable dish of tea with the widow. He has been there every evening this month past. How long things are to be in this train, heaven only knows. But he does visit there, and I attend him. I ask my master, Sir, says I, what time will you please to want me? He fixes the hour, and I strut by Mrs. Mignonet, without so much as tipping her a single glance. She stands watering at the mouth, and 'a pretty fellow that,' says she: Ay, gaze on, says I, gaze on: I know what you would be at: you would be glad to have me: but sour grapes, my dear; and so home I come to cherish my own lovely little wanton: you know I do; and after toying with thee, I fly back to my master, later indeed than he appoints, but always too soon for him. He is loth to part; he lingers and dangles, and I stand cooling my heels. Oh! to the devil I pitch such a life.

Mus. Why don't you strive to reclaim the vile man?

Will. Softly; not so fast. I have my talent, to be sure; yes, I must acknowledge some talent. But

can you suppose that I have power to turn the drift of his inclinations? Can I give him a new taste, and lead him as I please? And to whom? To his wife? Ridiculous! A wife has no attraction now; the spring of the passions flies back; it won't do.

Mus. Fine talking! and you admire yourself for it, don't you? Can you proceed, sir?

Will. I tell you a wife is out of date: the time was, but that's all over; a wife is a drug now; mere tar-water, with every virtue under heaven, but nobody takes it.

Mus. Have done, or I'll print these ten nails upon your rogue's face.

Will. Come and kiss me, I say.

Mus. A fiddlestick for your kisses, while you encourage your master to open rebellion against the best of wives.

Will. I tell you 'tis all her own fault. Why does she not study to please him as you do me. Come and throw your arms about my neck.

Mus. As I used to do, Mr. Impudence?

Will. Then I must force you to your own good. [Kisses her.] Pregnant with delight! egad, if my master was not in the next room— [Bell rings.

Mus. Hush! my lady's bell: how long has he been up?

Will. He has been up—[Kisses her.] 'Sdeath! you have set me all on fire. [Kisses her.

Mus. There, there; have done now? the bell rings again. What must I say? When did he come home?

Will. He came home—[Kisses her.]—he came home at five this morning; damned himself for a blockhead; [Kisses.] went to bed in a surly humour; was tired of himself and every body else. [Bell rings, he kisses her.] And he is now in tip-toe spirits with Sir Brilliant Fashion in that room yonder.

Mus. Sir Brilliant Fashion? I wish my lady would mind what he says to her—You great bear! you have given me such a flush in my face! [Takes a pocket

looking-glass.] I look pretty well, I think. There, [*Kisses him.*] have done, and let me be gone. [*Exit.*

Will. There goes high and low life contrasted in one person. She has not dived at the bottom of my master's secrets; that's one good thing. What she knows, she'll blab. We shall hear of this widow from Bath: but the plot lies deeper than they are aware of. Inquire they will; and let 'em, say I; their answer will do 'em no good. 'Mr. Lovemore 'visit the widow Bellmour?' We know 'no such 'person.' That's what they'll get for their pains. Their puzzle will be greater than ever; and they may sit down to chew the end of disappointed malice—Hush! my master and Sir Brilliant: I'll take care of a single rogue, and get me out of their way. [*Exit.*

Enter LOVEMORE and Sir BRILLIANT.

Love. My dear Sir Brilliant, I must both pity and laugh at you. Thou art metamorphosed into the most whimsical being!

Sir Bril. If your railery diverts you, go on with it. This is always the case: apply for sober advice, and your friend plays you off with a joke.

Love. Sober advice! very far gone indeed. There is no such thing as talking soberly to the tribe of lovers. That eternal absence of mind that possesses you all! There is no society with you. I was damnable company myself, when I was one of the pining herd: but a dose of matrimony has cooled me pretty handsomely; and here comes *repetatur haustus*.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady sends her compliments, and begs to know how you do this morning.

Love. [*Aside to Sir Bril.*] The novelty of the compliment is enlivening—It is the devil to be teased in this manner—What did you say, child?

Mus. My lady hopes you find yourself well this morning.

Love. Ay, your lady—give her my compliments, and tell her—and tell her I hope she is well, and—

[*Yawns.*

Mus. She begs you won't think of going out without seeing her.

Love. To be sure, she has such variety every time one sees her—my head aches woefully—tell your lady—I shall be glad to see her; I'll wait on her—*[Fawns.]* tell her what you will.

Mus. A brute!—I shall let my lady know, sir.

[Exit,

Love. My dear Sir Brilliant, you see me an example before your eyes. Put the widow Bellmour out of your head, and let my Lord Etheridge be the victim for you.

Sir Bril. Positively no; my pride is picqued. My Lord Etheridge shall find me a more formidable rival than he imagines. By the way, how long has the noble peer been in England?

Love. His motions are unknown to me.—*[Aside.]* I don't like that question.—His lordship is in France, is not he?

Sir Bril. No; he is certainly returned. The match is to be concluded privately.—He visits her *incog*.

Love. *[Forcing a laugh.]* Oh! no; that can't be; my Lord Etheridge loves parade. I cannot help laughing. The jealousy of you lovers is for ever conjuring up phantoms to torment yourselves. My dear Sir Brilliant, wait for realities; there are enough in life, and you may teach your fancy to be at rest, and give you no further trouble.

Sir Bril. Nay, don't let your fancy run away with you. What I tell you, is the real truth.

Love. Well, if it be true, and if Lord Etheridge is come to England to marry, do you go to France not to marry, and you will have the best of the bargain.

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. Sir Bashful Constant is in his chariot at the upper end of the street, and if your honour is at leisure he will wait upon you.

Love. Have not I sent him word I should be at home? Let him come as soon as he will. *[Exit Wil-*

liam.] Another instance, Sir Brilliant, to deter you from all thoughts of matrimony.

Sir Bril. Po! hang him! he is no precedent for me. A younger brother, who lived in middling life, comes to a title and an estate on the death of a consumptive baronet; marries a woman of quality, and now carries the primitive ideas of his narrow education into high life. Don't you remember when he had chambers in Fig-tree-court, and used to saunter and lounge away his time in Temple coffee-houses? The fellow is as dull as a bill in Chancery.

Love. But he is improv'd since that time.

Sir Bril. Impossible; don't you see how he goes on? He knows nothing of the world; if his eyes meet yours, he blushes up to his ears, and looks suspicious, as if he imagined you have a design upon him.

Love. I can explain that part of his character. He has a mortal aversion to wit and raillery, and dreads nothing so much as being laughed at for being particular.

Sir Bril. And so, fearing to be ridiculous, he becomes substantially so every moment.

Love. Even so, and if you look at him, he shrinks back from your observation, casting a sly, slow, jealous eye all round him, like Miss Bumpkin in a country village, awkwardly endeavouring to conceal what the increase of her shape discovers to the whole parish.

Sir Bril. And then his behaviour to his lady.

Love. Why, as to that point, I don't think he hates her. His fear of ridicule may be at the bottom. He has strange notions about the dignity of a husband. There is a secret, which he would fain tell me, and yet he is shy, and he hints, and he hesitates, and then he retreats back into himself, and ends just where he began. But with all his faults, he has fits of good-nature.—There;—his chariot's at the door.

Sir Bril. Lady Constant, you mean, has fits of good-nature. Have you made any progress there?

Love. That's well from you, who are the formidable man in that quarter.

Sir Bril. Oh! no; positively, no pretence, no colour for it.

Love. Don't I know that you have made advances?

Sir Bril. Advances! I pity my Lady Constant, and——

Love. Well, that's generous—hush! I hear him coming. Sir Brilliant, I admire your amorous charity of all things!

Enter Sir BASHFUL CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I have taken the liberty—but you seem to be busy, and I intrude perhaps.

Love. Oh, by no means: walk in, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Sir Brilliant, I am glad to see you.

[*Bows awkwardly.*]

Sir Bril. You do me honour, sir. I hope you left my lady well.

Sir Bril. [*Aside.*] An absurd brute!—Lovemore, I'll just step and pay a short visit to our friend over the way.

Love. Why in such a hurry?

Sir Bril. I shall return immediately. I'll be with you before you are dressed. Sir Bashful, I kiss your hand.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Bash. I am glad he is gone. I have something, Mr. Lovemore, that I want to advise with you about.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. I have had another brush with my wife.

Love. I am sorry for it, Sir Bashful.—[*Aside.*] I am perfectly glad of it.

Sir Bash. Pretty warm the quarrel was. She took it in a high tone. Sir Bashful, says she, I wonder you will disgrace yourself at this rate. You know my pin-money is not sufficient. The mercer and every body dunning me! I can't go on after this fashion, says she, and then something about her quality.—You know, Mr. Lovemore, [*Smiling.*] she is a woman of high quality.

Love. Yes, and a very fine woman,

Sir Bash. No, no, no; not much of that—and yet—*[Looks at him and smiles.]* Do you think her a fine woman?

Love. Undoubtedly; where do you see any body that outshines her?

Sir Bash. Why to be sure—*[Smiling.]* one does not often see her eclipsed. I think she is what you may call a fine woman. She keeps good company.

Love. The very best.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; your tiptop, none else. And yet to encourage her too far were dangerous. Too complying a husband makes but a sorry figure in the eyes of the world.

Love. The world will talk, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. Too fast, Mr. Lovemore. Their tongues will run on, and one does not like to give them a subject. I answered her stoutly: Madam, says I, a fig for your quality: I am inaster in my own house, and who do you think—*[Winks at Lovemore.]* putting myself in a passion, you know—Who do you think is to pay for your cats and your dogs, and your monkeys, and your squirrels, and your gaming debts?

Love. How could you? That was sharply said.

Sir Bash. Yes; I gave it her. But for all that I am main good-natured at the bottom.

Love. You was not in earnest then?

Sir Bash. No, no; that's the point: a man must keep up his own dignity. I'll tell you what I did.

Love. Well;—you did what's proper, I dare say.

Sir Bash. I hope you'll think so.—Don't laugh at me.—Come, I will tell you. I went to her mercer sily, and paid him the money. *[Smiling.]*

Love. Did you?

Sir Bash. *[Looking alarmed.]* Was not it right?

Love. It was elegant.

Sir Bash. I am glad you approve. I took care to save appearances. One would not have the world know it.

Love. By no means.

Sir Bash. It would make them think me too uxorious.

Love. So it would—[*Aside.*] I must encourage that notion.—While you live, guard against being too uxorious. Though our wives deserve “our fondness,” the world will laugh at us;—and hark ye, if our wives don’t deserve it, they’ll laugh at us the more.

Sir Bash. I know it. And so, says I, Mr. Lute-string, there’s your money, but tell nobody that I paid it slily.

Love. Why, that’s doing a genteel thing by stratagem.—Admirably contrived!

Sir Bash. I think it was. But I have a deeper secret for you.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. I have.—May I trust you?

Love. Now there you hurt me. I feel that, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. I beg your pardon. I know you are my friend. I have great confidence in you. You must know—look ye, Mr. Lovemore—you must know—

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady desires to know if you choose a dish of tea this morning.

Love. Po! ridiculous!—tell your mistress—go about your business. [Turns her out.]

Sir Bash. I see how it is. He does not care a cherry-stone for his wife.

Love. Such impertinence!—Well, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. He does not value her a pinch of snuff.

[*Aside.*

Love. Well, I am all attention.

Sir Bash. It does not signify. A foolish affair; I won’t trouble you.

Love. Nay, that’s unkind. It will be no trouble.

Sir Bash. Well, well, I—I—Do you think Muslin did not overhear us?

Love. Not a syllable. Come, we are safe.

Sir Bash. I don’t know, but—let me ask you a question first.—Have you any regard for your lady?

Love. The highest value for her. But then, you know, appearances——

Sir Bash. Right!—I repose it with you.—You must know, Mr. Lovemore, as I told you, I am at the bottom very good-natured, and though it may be thought——we are interrupted again.

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Lovemore, I have paid my visit.

Love. Pshaw!—this is unlucky——You are as good as your word, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. Perhaps you have business?

Sir Bash. No, no business—[*Turns to Lovemore.*] there's no proceeding now—I was going, [*To Sir Brilliant.*] Mr. Lovemore, I wish you a good day.

Love. Po! Pr'ythee, you shan't leave me yet.

Sir Bash. I must; I can't stay.—[*Aside to Lovemore.*] Another time. Suppose you call at my house at one o'clock.

Love. With all my heart.

Sir Bash. Do so; nobody shall interrupt us. Mr. Lovemore, I take my leave. Sir Brilliant, I kiss your hand. You won't forget, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. Oh, no; depend upon me.

Sir Bash. A good morning. He is the only friend I have. [*Exit.*]

Love. Ha, ha! you broke in in the most critical moment. He was just going to be delivered of his secrets?

Sir Bril. I beg your pardon. How could you let me?

Love. Nay, no matter. I shall worm it out of him.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mus. My lady, sir, is quite impatient.

Love. Po! for ever teasing! I'll wait upon her presently. [*Exit Muslin.*]

Sir Bril. I'll step and chat with her while you dress. May I take the liberty?

Love. You know you may: no ceremony. How could you ask me such a question?—A-propos, Sir

Brilliant, I want a word with you. Step with me into the study for a moment.

Sir Brill. I attend you.

Love. Poor Sir Bashful!—ha, ha!—a ridiculous unaccountable—What does he mean?

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Mrs. LOVEMORE at her Tea-Table

Mrs. Love. This trash of tea! I don't know why I drink so much of it. Heigho!—What keeps Muslin? Surely never was an unhappy woman treated with such cruel indifference; nay, with such open, such undisguised insolence of gallantry.

Enter MUSLIN.

Mrs. Love. Well, Muslin, have you seen his prime minister?

Mus. Yes, ma'am, I have seen Mr. William. He says his master is going out, according to the old trade, and he does not expect to see him again till to-morrow morning. Mr. Lovemore is now in the study. Sir Brilliant Fashion is with him: I heard them, as I passed by the door, laughing as loud as two actors in a comedy.

Mrs. Love. About some precious mischief, I'll be sworn, and all at my cost. Heigho!

Mus. Dear ma'am, why chagrin yourself about a vile man, that is not worth—no, as I hope for mercy, not worth a single sigh?

Mrs. Love. What can I do, Muslin?

Mus. Do, ma'am!—If I was as you, I'd do for him. If I could not cure my grief, I'd find some comfort, that's what I would.

Mrs. Love. Comfort? alas! there is none for me.

Mus. And whose fault then? Would any body but you—it provokes me to think of it—Would any but you—young, handsome, with wit, graces, talents,—would any body, with so many accomplishments, sit at home here as melancholy as a poor servant out of place?—And all for what? For a hus-

band! And such a husband! What do you think the world will say of you, ma'am?

Mrs. Love. I care not what they say, I am tired of the world, and the world may be tired of me, if it will. My troubles are to myself only, and I must endeavour to bear them. Who knows what patience may do? If Mr. Lovemore has any feeling left, my conduct and his own heart may one day incline him to do me justice.

Mus. But, dear ma'am, that's waiting for dead men's shoes. Incline him to do you justice!—What signifies expecting and expecting! Give me a bird in the hand. If all the women in London, who happen to be in your case, were to sit down and die of the spleen, what would become of the public places? They might turn Vauxhall to a hop-garden; make a brew-house of Ranelagh, and let both the playhouses to a methodist-preacher. We should not have the racketting we have now. John, let the horses be put to—John, go to my Lady Trumpabout, and invite her to a small party of twenty or thirty card-tables.—John, run to my Lady Catgut, and let her know I'll wait upon her ladyship to the opera.—John, run as fast as ever you can, with my compliments to Mr. Varny, and tell him it will be the death of me, if I have not a box for the new play. Lord bless you, ma'am, they rantipole it about this town, with as unconcerned looks, and as florid outsides, as if they were treated at home like so many goddesses; though every body knows possession has ungoddessed them all long ago, and their husbands care no more for them, no, by Jingo, no more than they care for their husbands.

Mrs. Love. At what a rate you run on!

Mus. It is enough to make a body run on. If every body thought like you, ma'am——

Mrs. Love. If every body loved like me!

Mus. A brass thimble for love, if it is not returned by love. What the deuce is here to do? Love for love is something: but to love alone, where's the good

of that? Shall I go and fix my heart upon a man, who shall despise me for that very reason? And ay, says he, 'Poor fool! I see she adores me. The woman is well enough, only she has one inconvenient circumstance about her; I am married to her, and marriage is the devil.'

Mrs. Love. Will you have done?

Mus. I have not half done, ma'am. And when the vile man goes a rogueing, he smiles impudently in your face, 'and I am going to the chocolate-house, my dear; amuse yourself in the mean time, my love.' Fye upon 'em! I know 'em all. Give me a husband that will enlarge the circle of my innocent pleasures: but a husband now-a-days is no such thing. A husband now is nothing but a scare-crow, to shew you the fruit, but touch it if you dare. 'The devil's in 'em, the Lord forgive me for swearing. A husband is a mere bugbear, a snap-dragon, a monster; that is to say, if one make him so, then he is a monster indeed; and if one do not make him so, then he behaves like a monster; and of the two evils, by my troth——But here, ma'am, here comes one who can tell you all about it. Here comes Sir Brilliant: ask his advice, ma'am.

Mrs. Love. His advice?——Ask advice of the man who has estranged Mr. Lovemore's affections from me?

Mus. Well, I protest and vow, I think Sir Brilliant a very pretty gentleman. He is the very pink of the fashion. He dresses fashionably, lives fashionably, wins your money fashionably, loses his own fashionably, and does every thing fashionably; and then he looks so lively, and so much to say, and so never at a loss!——but here comes.

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Mrs. Lovemore, my dear ma'am, always in a vis-a-vis party with your *suivante*?—Afford me your pardon, if I say this does a little wear the appearance of being out of humour with the world.

Mrs. Love. Far from it, Sir Brilliant. We were engaged in your panegyric.

Sir Bril. My panegyric! Then am I come most a-propos to give the portrait a few finishing touches. Mr. Lovemore, as soon as he is dressed, will wait upon you: in the mean time I can help you to some anecdotes, which will enable you to colour your canvass a little higher.

Mrs. Love. Among these anecdotes, I hope you will not omit the bright exploit of seducing Mr. Lovemore from all domestic happiness.

[*She makes a sign to Muslin to go.*]

Sir Bril. I, madam?—Let me perish if ever—

Mrs. Love. Oh! sir, I can make my observations.

Sir Bril. May fortune eternally forsake me, and beauty frown on me, if I am conscious of any plot upon earth.

Mrs. Love. Don't assert too strongly, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. May I never throw a winning cast—

Mrs. Love. It is in vain to deny it, sir.

Sir Bril. May I lose the next sweepstakes, if I have ever, in thought, word, or deed, been accessory to his infidelity. I alienate the affections of Mr. Lovemore! Consider, madam, how would this tell in Westminster Hall? Sir Brilliant Fashion, what say you, guilty of this indictment, or not guilty? Not guilty, poss. Thus issue is joined. You enter the court: but, my dear madam, veil those graces that adorn your person; abate the fire of those charms: so much beauty will corrupt the judges: give me a fair trial.

Mrs. Love. And thus you think to laugh it away.

Sir Bril. Nay, hear me out. You appear in court you charge the whole upon me, without a syllable as to the how, when, and where: no proof positive; the prosecution ends, and I begin my defence.

Mrs. Love. And by playing these false colours you think I am to be amused?

Sir Bril. Nay, Mrs. Lovemore, I am now upon my defence. Only hear.—You will please to consider,

Gentlemen of the Jury, that Mr. Lovemore is not a minor, nor I his guardian. He loves gaiety, pleasure, and enjoyment: is it my fault? He is possessed of talents and a taste for pleasure, which he knows how to gratify: can I restrain him? He knows the world, makes the most of life, and plucks the fruit that grows around him: am I to blame? This is the whole affair.—How say you, Gentlemen of the Jury?—Not guilty. There you see how it is. I have cleared myself.

Mrs. Love. Brisk, lively, and like yourself, Sir Brilliant! But if you can imagine this bantering way—

Sir Bril. Acquitted by my country, ma'am; fairly acquitted.

Mrs. Love. After the very edifying counsel which you give to Mr. Lovemore, this loose strain is not in the least surprising. And, sir, your late project—

Sir Bril. My late project!

Mrs. Love. Your late project, sir. Not content with leading Mr. Lovemore, into a thousand scenes of dissipation, you have introduced him lately to your mistress Bellmour. You understand me, sir.

Sir Bril. Ma'am, he does not so much as know the widow Bellmour.

Mrs. Love. Nay, Sir Brilliant, have a care: justify it if you can, or give it a turn of wit. There is no occasion to hazard yourself too far.

Sir Bril. Falsehood I disdain, madam; and I, Sir Brilliant Fashion, declare that Mr. Lovemore is not acquainted with the widow Bellmour. And if he was, what then? Do you know the lady?

Mrs. Love. I know, her, sir? A person of that character?

Sir Bril. Oh!—I see you don't know her; but I will let you into her history.—Pray be seated—you shall know her whole history, and then judge for yourself. The widow Bellmour, madam—

Love. [*Within.*] William, are the horses put to?

Sir Bril. We are interrupted.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Love. Very well : let the carriage be brought round directly.—How do you do, my dear?—Sir Brilliant, I beg your pardon.—My love, you don't answer me : how do you do this morning?

[With an air of cold civility.]

Mrs. Love. A little indisposed in mind : but indisposition of the mind is of no consequence : nobody pities it.

Love. I beg your pardon, Mrs. Lovemore. Indisposition of the mind—Sir Brilliant, that's a mighty pretty ring on your finger.

Sir Bril. A bauble ; will you look at it?

[Gives the ring.]

Mrs. Love. Though I have but few obligations to Sir Brilliant, I suppose I am to ascribe to him the favour of this visit, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. *[Looking at the ring and laughing.]* Now there you wrong me.—Your inquiries about my health have been very obliging this morning, and I came to return the compliment before I go out. It is set very neatly.

[Gives back the ring.]

Mrs. Love. Are you going out, sir?

Love. A matter of business—How I do hate business!—But business, *[Examining his ruffles]*—business must be done.—Pray is there any news?—Any news, my dear?

Mrs. Love. It would be news to me, sir, if you would be kind enough to let me know whether I may expect the favour of your company at dinner to-day.

Love. It would be impertinent in me to answer such a question, for I can give no direct answer to it.—I am the slave of events ; just as things happen ; perhaps I may, perhaps not. But don't let me be of any inconvenience to you. Is it material where a body eats?—Have you heard what happened to me?

[Aside to Sir Brilliant.]

Sir Bril. When and where?

Love. A word in your ear—with your permission, ma'am?

Mrs. Love. That cold, contemptuous civility, Mr. Lovemore——

Love. Po! pr'ythee now, how can you?—that is very peevish, and very ill-natured. [*Turning to Sir Brill.*] I lost every thing I played for after you went. The foreigner and he understand one another.—I beg your pardon, Mrs. Lovemore: it was only about an affair at the opera.

Mrs. Love. The opera, or any thing, is more agreeable than my company.

Love. Now there again you wrong me.—[*To Sir Brilliant.*] We dine at the St. Alban's.—How can you, Mrs. Lovemore? I make it a point not to incommode you. You possibly may have some private party; and it would be unpolite in me to obstruct your schemes of pleasure. Would not it, Sir Brilliant?

Sir Brill. Oh!—Gothic to the last degree!

Love. Very true; vulgar and mechanic! [*Both stand laughing.*]

Mrs. Love. Go on; make sport for yourselves, gentlemen.

Love. Ho! ho! ho! I am sore with laughing.—If you, madam, have arranged an agreeable party, for me to be present, it would look as if we lived together like Sir Bashful Constant and his lady; who are always, like two game cocks, ready armed to goad and spur one another. Hey! Sir Brilliant?

Sir Brill. Oh! the very thing: or like Sir Theodore Traffic at Turnbridge taking his wife under the arm in the public rooms, and 'come along home, I tell you'.

Love. Exactly so. [*Both continue laughing.*] Odds my life; I shall be beyond my time. [*Looks at his watch.*] Any commands into the city, my dear?

Mrs. Love. Commands!—no, sir, I have no commands.

Love. I have an appointment at my banker's; Sir Brilliant, you know old Discount?

Sir Bril. He that was in parliament, and had the large contract?

Love. The same: *Entire Butt*, I think, was the name of his borough. Can I set you down?

Sir Bril. No; my carriage waits. I shall rattle half the town over presently.

Love. As you will. Sir Brilliant will entertain you, ma'am. *Au revoir*, my love.—Sir Brilliant, yours.—Who waits there? [Exit singing.]

Sir Bril. Bon voyage.—You see, madam, that I don't deprive you of his company.

Mrs. Love. Your influence is now unnecessary. It is grown habitual to him: he will drive to your Mrs. Bellmour, I suppose.

Sir Bril. A-propos; that brings us back to the little history I was going to give you of that lady. What is your charge against her? That she is amiable? Granted. Young, gay, rich, handsome, with enchanting talents, it is no wonder all the pretty fellows are on their knees to her. Her manner so entertaining! that quickness of transition from one thing to another! that round of variety; and every new attitude does so become her; and she has such a feeling heart, and with an air of giddiness so nice a conduct!

Mrs. Love. Mighty well, sir: she is a very vestal. Finish your portrait. A vestal from your school of painting must be a curiosity.—But how comes it, sir, if she is this wonder, that your honourable proposals are at an end there?

Sir Bril. Compulsion, ma'am: it is not voluntary. My Lord Etheridge is the happy man. I thought he was out of the kingdom; but his lordship is with her every evening. I can scarce gain admittance; and so all that remains for me, is to do justice to the lady, and console myself in the best way I can for the insufficiency of my pretensions.

Mrs. Love. Am I to believe all this?

Sir Bril. May the first woman I pay my addresses to, strike me to the centre with a supercilious eye-

brow, if every syllable is not minutely true.—So that you see I am not the cause of your inquietude.—There is not in the world a person, who more earnestly aspires to prove the tender esteem he bears you.—I have long panted for an opportunity—by all that's soft she listens to me! [*Aside.*]—I have long panted ma'am, for a tender moment like this—

Mrs. Love. [*Looks gravely at him.*] Sir!

Sir Bril. I have panted with all the ardour, which charms like yours must kindle in every heart!—

Mrs. Love. [*Walks away.*] This liberty, sir—

Sir Bril. Consider, madam: we have both cause of discontent; both disappointed; both crossed in love; and the least we can do is both to join, and sweeten each other's cares.

Mrs. Love. And your friend, sir, who has just left you—

Sir Bril. He, madam, for a long time—I have seen it, with vexation seen it,—yes, he has long been false to honour, love, and you.

Mrs. Love. Sir Brilliant, I have done. You take my wrongs too much to heart, sir. [*Rings a bell.*]

“*Sir Bril.* Those eyes that tell us what the sun is made of, those hills of driven snow.”

Mrs. Love. Will nobody answer there?

Enter MUSLIN.

Sir Bril. Madam, I desist: when you are in better humour, recollect what I have said. Your adorer takes his leave. Sir Brilliant, mind your hits, and her strait-laced virtue will surrender at last. Madam—

[*Bows respectfully; Exit.*]

Mus. As I live and breathe, ma'am, if I was you, I would not fluster myself about it.

Mrs. Love. About what?

Mus. What signifies mincing the matter? I heard it all.

Mrs. Love. You did? did you? [*Looks angrily.*]

Mus. Ma'am.

Mrs. Love. Impertinence! [*Walks about.*] Oh! Mr. Lovemore!—To make his character public, and

render him the topic of every tea-table throughout this town. I must avoid that.

Mus. What the dence is here to do?—An unmannerly thing, for to go for to huff me in this manner!

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Love. That would only widen the breach, and instead of neglect, might call forth resentment, and settle at last into a fixed aversion: lawyers, parting, and separate maintenance!—What must be done?

Mus. What is she thinking of now?—A sulky thing not to be more familiar with such a friend as I am.—Did you speak to me, ma'am?

Mrs. Love. It may succeed; suppose I try it. Muslin.

Mus. Ma'am.

[*Running to her.*

Mrs. Love. You heard Sir Brilliant say that Mr. Lovemore is not acquainted with the widow?

Mus. Lard, ma'am, he's as full of tricks as a French milliner. I know he does visit there: I know it from William. I'll be hanged in my own garters, if he does not.

Mrs. Love. I know not what to do. Let my chair be got ready.

Mus. Your chair, ma'am!—are you a going out?

Mrs. Love. Let me hear no more questions: do as I order you.

[*Exit.*

Mus. Which way is the wind now? No matter; she does not know what she'd be at. If she would but take my advice,—go abroad, visit every where, see the world, throw open her doors, give balls, assemblies, concerts; sing, dance, dress, spend all her money, run in debt, ruin her husband; there would be some sense in that; the man would stay at home then to quarrel with her. She would have enough of his company. But no; mope, mope, for ever; heigho! tease, tease; Muslin, step to William; where's his master? When did he come home? How long has he been up? A fine life truly.—I love to be in the fashion, for my part. Bless me, I had like to have forgot. Mrs. Marmalet comes to my rout to-night.

She might as well stay away : she is nothing but mere lumber. The formal thing won't play higher than shilling whist. How the devil does she think I can make a shilling party for her? There is no such a thing now-a-days : nobody plays shilling whist now, unless I was to invite the trades-people : but I shan't let myself down for Madam Marinalet, that I promise her. [Exit.]

ACT II. SCENE I.

An Apartment at Sir BASHFUL CONSTANT'S. Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bashful. DID not I hear a rap at the door? Yes, yes, I did; I am right. The carriage is just now driving away. Who answers there? Sideboard; step hither, Sideboard. I must know who it is: my wife keeps the best company in England. Hold, I must be wary. Servants love to pry into their master's secret.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. Whose carriage was that at the door?

Side. The Duchess of Hurricane, your honour.

Sir Bash. The Duchess of Hurricane? [*Walks aside, and smiles.*] A woman of great rank!—what did she want?

Side. She has left this card for my lady.

Sir Bash. A card? Let me see it. [*Reads.*] *The Duchess of Hurricane presents compliments to Lady Constant. She has left the hounds and the foxes, and the brutes that gallop after them, to their own dear society for the rest of the winter. Her Grace keeps Wednesdays at Hurricane House for the rest of the winter.*—Make me thankful, here's a card from a Duchess?—what have you there?

Side. A parcel of cards, that have been left here this morning.

Sir Bash. All these in one morning? [*Looks at them.*] Why I may as well keep an inn; may as well

keep the Coach and Horses in Piccadilly. [*Reads fast.*] *Lady Riot*—*Mrs. Allnight*—*The Duchess of Carmine*—look ye there, another duchess! *Lady Bassett*—*Lord Pleurisie*—*the Countess of Ratifie*—*Sir Richard Lungs*—*Lord Laudanum*—*Sir Charles Valerian*—*Lady Hectick*—*Lady Mary Grabble*—I can't bear all this, Sideboard [*Aside, and smiling.*] I can't bear the pleasure of it: all people of tip-top condition to visit my wife?

Enter FURNISH.

Sir Bash. What's the matter, Furnish?

Fur. The matter, sir?—Nothing's the matter.

Sir Bash. What are you about?—Where are you going! What have you to do now?

Fur. Only to tell the chairmen they must take Black George with his flambeau with them this evening, and carry the chair to pay visits for my lady.

Sir Bash. An empty chair to pay visits!—what polite ways people of fashion have got of being intimate with each other—[*Aside.*] Absurd as it is, I am glad to see my wife keep pace with the best of them. I laugh at it, and yet I like it.—Wounds! I shall be found out by my servants. I tell you Sideboard, and you, Mrs. Busy Body, that your mistress leads a life of noise and hurry, and cards and dice, and vanity and nonsense, and I am resolved to bear it no longer. Don't I hear her coming?

Fur. My lady is coming, sir.

Sir Bash. [*Aside and smiling.*] She looks charmingly.—Now I'll tell her roundly a piece of my mind. You shall see who commands in this house.

Enter Lady CONSTANT.

Sir Bash. [*Steals a look.*] I could almost give up the point when I look at her.—So, madam, I have had my house full of duns again to day.

Lady Cons. Obliging creatures, to call so often. What did they want?

Sir Bash. What!—what should they want but money?

Lady Cons. And you paid them I suppose?

Sir Bash. You suppose!—'Sdeath, inadam, what do you take me for?

Lady Cons. I took you for a husband: my brother prescribed you. But his prescription has done me no good.

Sir Bash. Nor me either: I have had a bitter pill of it.

Lady Cons. But the pill was gilded for you. My fortune, I take it, has paid off the old family mortgage on your estate.

Sir Bash. And at the rate you go on a new mortgage will swallow up my estate. I see you are an ungrateful woman.

Lady Cons. That is, as you keep the account.

Sir Bash. And my accounts will shew it. Day after day nothing but extravagance to gratify your vanity. Did not I go into parliament to please you? Did not I go down to the Borough of Smoke-and-Sot, and get drunk there for a whole month together? Did not I get mobbed at the George and Vulture? and pelted and horsewhipped the day before the election? And was not I obliged to steal out of the town in a rabbit-cart? And all this to be somebody, as you call it? Did not I stand up in the House to make a speech to shew what an orator you had married? And did not I expose myself? Did I know whether I stood upon my head or my heels for half an hour together? And did not a great man from the Treasury-bench tell me never to speak again?

Lady Cons. And why not take his advice?

Sir Bash. What in the name of common sense had I to do in parliament? My country! what's my country to me? The debts of the nation, and your gaming debts are nothing to me. I must help to pay both, must I? I can vote against taxes, and I can advertise in the Gazette to secure me from your extravagance. I have not lived in the Temple for nothing.

Fur. He slept there, and calls it studying the law.

Sir Bash. Hold you your tongue, Mrs. Pert; leave the room. Go both about your business.

[*Exeunt Furnish and Sideboard.*]

[*Aside.*] I have kept it up before my servants. [*Looks at Lady Constant.*] She is a fine woman after all.

Lady Cons. Is there never to be an end of this usage, sir? Am I to be for ever made unhappy by your humours.

Sir Bash. Humours! good sense and sound judgment, in the fine lady's dictionary, are to be called humours?

Lady Cons. And your humours are now grown insupportable.

Sir Bash. Your profusion is insupportable. At the rate you go on, how am I to find money for my next election?—If you would but talk this matter over coolly—She talks like an angel, and I wish I could say [*Aside.*] the same of myself.—What will the world think?—Only command your temper—what will they think, if I am seen to encourage your way of life?

Lady Cons. Amuse yourself that way sir.—Avoid one error and run into the opposite extreme.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] There; a translation from Horace! *Dum vitant stulti vitia*—She is a notable woman.

Lady Cons. Let me tell you, there is not in life a more ridiculous sight than the person who guards with imaginary wisdom, against one giant vice, and leaves himself open to a million of absurdities.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] I am nothing to her in argument—she has a tongue that can reason me out of my senses.—I could almost find it in my heart to tell her the whole truth.—You know, my Lady Constant, that when you want any thing in reason——

Lady Cons. Is it unreasonable to live with decency? Is it unreasonable to keep the company my rank and education have entitled me to? Is it unreasonable to conform to the modes of life, when your fortune can so well afford it?

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] She is a very reasonable woman,

and I wish I had but half her sense.—You know I am good-natured in the main, and if a sum of money within a moderate compass—If a brace of hundreds—[*Aside*] why should not I make it three?—I know that you have contracted habits of life, and [*In a softened tone.*] habit, I know, is not easily conquered: and if three [*Smiling.*] hundred pounds will prevent disputes, why [*Smiling.*] as to the matter of three hundred pounds—

Enter FURNISH, with a Band-box.

Fur. Your ladyship's things from the milliner's.

Sir Bash. Death and fury! this woman has overheard me. Three hundred pounds, madam! [*In a violent passion.*] let me tell you that three hundred pounds—what right have you to shovel away three hundred pounds?

Lady Cons. Why does the man fly out into such a passion?

Sir Bash. I will allow no such doings in my house. Don't I often come when my hall is besieged with a parcel of powder monkey servants? And did not I the other day, before I could get into my own doors, entangle myself among the chairmen's poles, and was not I confined there like a man in the stocks?

Lady Cons. Why would you be so awkward?

Sir Bash. An eternal scene of routs and drums. Have not I seen you put the fee simple of a score of my best acres upon a single card? And have not I muttered to myself, 'if that woman was as much in love with me as she is with Pam, what an excellent wife she would make?'

Lady Cons. Pam is very obliging: why won't you strive to be as agreeable?

Sir Bash. 'Sdeath, madam, you are so fond of play, that I should not wonder to see my next child marked on the forehead with a pair royal of aces.

Fur. I am sure you deserve to be marked on the forehead with a pair of—

Sir Bash. Malapert hussy! do you meddle? Begone this moment.

[*Exit Furnish,*

Lady Cons. Fy upon it, Sir Bashful? I am tired of blushing for you.

Sir Bash. I am afraid I have gone too far: she is ashamed of me. *[Aside.]*

Lady Cons. You agreed to a separation the other day, and there remains nothing but to execute articles, and make an end of all this disquiet.

Sir Bash. A separate maintenance will go but a little way to answer the bawling of milliners, mercers, jewellers, and gaming debts.

Lady Cons. It will purchase content, and nothing can obtain that under your roof.

Sir Bash. *[Aside.]* I have shot my bolt too far—I fancy, my Lady Constant, that you don't know me. We might explain matters, and—'sdeath *[Aside.]* I am going to blab—I say, madam, if you understood me rightly—as to the authority of a husband, I might perhaps, be brought to give it up, in part at least; and if nobody was the wiser, I might connive—Po! confusion! interrupted again by that—

Enter FURNISH.

Fur. A servant from Mrs. Loveinore, madam, to know—

Sir Bash. The authority of a husband I never will give up.

Lady Cons. A storm, a whirlwind is fitter to converse with.

Sir Bash. I will storm like a whirlwind in my own house. I have done, madam; you are an ungovernable woman—*[Aside, and smiling.]* She is a charming woman, and if nobody saw it, I would let her govern me with all my heart. *[Exit.]*

Lady Cons. Did any body ever see such behaviour?

Fur. Never; and how your ladyship bears it, I can't tell.

Lady Cons. That it should be my fate to be married to such a quicksand! What does Mrs. Loveinore say?

Fur. If your ladyship will be at home, she intends to do herself the pleasure of waiting upon you.

Act II. THE WAY TO KEEP HIM.

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Lady Cons. Very well; I shall be at home. Upon recollection, I want to see her. Let the servant wait: I'll write an answer. *[Exit.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment. Enter *Sir BASHFUL* and *LOVEMORE*.

Sir Bash. Walk in, Mr. Lovemore, walk in. I am heartily glad to see you. This is kind.

Love. I am ready, you see, to attend the call of friendship.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, you are a friend indeed,

Love. You do me honour, Sir Bashful. And your lady, how does she do?

Sir Bash. Perfectly well: in great spirits. *[Smiling at Lovemore.]* I never saw her look better: but we have had t'other skirmish since I saw you.

Love. Another?

Sir Bash. Ay, another; and I did not bate her an ace. She is a rare one to argue. She is fit to discuss a point with any man. Nobody like her. Wit at will. I thought I managed the dispute, and that I should soon have had her at what you call a *non-plus*. But no, no; no such a thing; she can give you a sharp turn in a moment.

Love. Ay!

Sir Bash. Give her her due, I am nothing to her. I thought I had her fast, but she went round me quick as lightning; and would you believe it? *[Looks highly pleased.]* She did not leave me a word to say.

Love. Well! that was hard upon you.

Sir Bash. No, not hard at all. Those little victories I don't mind. You know I told you I had something for your private ear. Have you observed nothing odd and singular in me?

Love. Not in the least. In the whole circle of my acquaintance I know nobody so little tinged with oddity.

Sir Bash. What have you seen nothing? *[Laughs.]* Have you remarked nothing particular in regard to my wife?

Love. Why, you don't live happy with her: but that is not a singular case.

Sir Bash. But I tell you—this must be in confidence—I am, at the bottom, a very odd fellow.

Love. You do yourself injustice, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. No, not in the least. It is too true—I am in the main a very odd fellow; I am indeed; as odd a fish as lives; and you must have seen it before now.

Love. I see it!—I am not apt to spy defects in my friends. What can this be! You are not jealous, I hope?

Sir Bash. You have not hit the right nail on the head. No, not jealous. Do her justice, I am safe as to that point. My lady has high notions of honour. No, it is not that.

Love. Not a ray of light to guide me: explain, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. [*Smiling at him.*] You could never have imagined it. But first let me shut this door.

Love. What whim has got possession of him now?

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I have great dependance upon you. I am going to make a discovery—I blush at the very thought of it. [*Turns away.*]

Love. Be a man, Sir Bashful; out with it at once; let me advise you.

Sir Bash. The very thing I want. The affair is—but then if he should betray me!—Mr. Lovemore, I doubt you, and yet esteem you. Some men there are, who, when a confidence is reposed in them, take occasion from thence to hold a hank over their friend, and tyrannize him all the rest of his days.

Love. O fy! this is ungenerous. True friendship is of another quality: it feels from sympathy; honour is the active principle; and the strictest secrecy is an inviolable rule.

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, I have no further doubt—stay; did not you hear a noise? Don't I see a shadow moving under the bottom of that door? [*Goes to the door.*]

Love. What has got into his head?

Sir Bash. [*Looking out.*] Servants have a way of listening.

Love. Rank jealousy! he has it through the very brain!

Sir Bash. No, no; all's safe. Mr. Lovemore, I will make you the depositary, the faithful depositary of a secret: let it pass from the bottom of my heart to the inmost recess of yours: there let it rest concealed from every prying eye.—My inclination—There—I see a laugh already forming in every feature of your face.

Love. Then my face is no true index of the mind. Were you to know the agitations in which you keep me by this suspense—

Sir Bash. I believe it. To make an end at once, my inclinations are totally changed—no, not changed, but they are not what they seemed to be. Love is the passion that possesses me—I am in love, and—[*Turns from him.*] and I am ashamed of myself.

Love. Ashamed! love is a noble passion: but don't let me hear any more about it. Lady Constant will discover all, and then the blame will fall on me. If your heart revolts from her, don't let me be thought in league with you. You need not involve me in a quarrel with her ladyship.

Sir Bash. You don't take me right. You are wide, quite wide of the mark. Hear me out.

Love. No, no more. You must excuse me.

Sir Bash. You shall hear me. The object of my passion, this charming woman, whom I dote on to distraction—

Love. Your pardon; I won't hear it—[*Walks away from him.*] When her ladyship hears of his gallantry, the devil is in the dice, if the spirit of revenge does not mould her to my purposes.

Sir Bash. [*Following Lovemore.*] I say, Mr. Lovemore, this adorable creature—

Love. Keep your secret, Sir Bashful. [*Avoiding him.*]

Sir Bash. [*Following him.*] Who looks so lovely in my eyes——

Love. Well; I don't desire to know her.

Sir Bash. You do know her. [*Following him.*] This idol of my heart is my own wife.

Love. [*Starts at him.*] Your own wife!

Sir Bash. Yes, my own wife. [*Looks silly, and turns away.*] 'Tis all over with me: I am undone.

Love. This is the most unexpected discovery.

Sir Bash. Look ye there, now; he laughs at me already.

Love. [*Aside.*] His wife must not know this. The grass is cut under my feet if ever she hears a word of it.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] He is struck with amazement, and does not say a word to me.

Love. [*Aside.*] I must not encourage him.—And can this be possible, Sir Bashful? In love with your own wife?

Sir Bash. Spare my confusion. I have made myself very ridiculous. [*Looks at him, and turns away.*] I know I have.

Love. Ridiculous! Far from it. Can it be wrong to love a valuable woman? Not to feel the impressions of beauty and of merit were downright insensibility; but then we should always admire with discretion. The folly of us married men consists in letting our wives perceive the vehemence with which we love; and the consequence is, we are enslaved for the rest of our lives.—I could trust you with a secret, which, perhaps, would keep you in countenance. Could you imagine it? I love my wife.

Sir Bash. How?

Love. I am in love with my wife.

Sir Bash. Oh! no, no;—hey! [*Looking highly pleased.*] you make me laugh. You don't love her, do you?

Love. Passionately, tenderly; with all the ardour of affection.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. Ha! ha!—I did

not expect this. This is some relief. Ha! ha!—you have made me happy. And have you led the life you have done all this time, on purpose to conceal your regard from her?

Love. For that very purpose. I esteem her I love her; but I would not have her know it.

Sir Bash. No!

Love. Upon no consideration; nor would I have the world know it.

Sir Bash. Perfectly right.

Love. To be sure. Tell your wife that you esteem her good qualities, and admire her person, she cries *victoria*, falls to plundering, and then you must either break her chain, or wear it in the face of the world, a laughing-stock for all your acquaintance.

Sir Bash. That is what I have always been afraid of.

Love. Not without reason. The world delights in ridicule. Do you know, if our secrets were to transpire, that we should have nothing but wit, and raillery, and fleers, and taunts flying about our ears?

Sir Bash. But I have taken good care. I have quarrelled with my lady ten times a day on purpose to cloak the affair, and prevent all suspicion.

Love. Admirable! I commend your prudence. Besides, my Lady Constant, you know, has some youthful vigour about her; a graceful person, and an eye that inflames desire; and desire at your time of life, you know——

Sir Bash. Po! it is not for that; that is nothing. I wear admirably well, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. Do you?

Sir Bash. As young as ever: but I don't let her know it.

Love. Well! if you are discreet in that point, you are a very Machiavel!

Sir Bash. Yes, yes, I fight cunning. [Laughs.]

Love. Let nothing betray you. Be upon your guard: that is my own plan exactly. You want no advice from me.

Sir Bash. Pardon me: you can assist me.—My dear brother sufferer, give me your hand. We can in a sly way be of great use to each other.

Love. As how?

Sir Bash. I'll tell you. There are some things which you know our wives expect to be done.

Love. So there are.—[*Aside.*] What the devil is he at now?

Sir Bash. Now if you will assist me——

Love. You may depend upon my assistance.

Sir Bash. Thus it is; my wife you know, keeps a power of company, and makes a great figure there. I could shew her in any company in England: I wish she could say the same of me.

Love. Why truly I wish she could.

Sir Bash. But that's out of the question.—Now, if you will come into my scheme—It must be a deep secret—How? Is that Sir Brilliant's voice?

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, you see what attraction you have. Lovemore, I did not expect to see you here.

Love. Nor did I expect you, Sir Brilliant. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. Confusion!—This unseasonable visit—
[*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. And your lady, is she at home, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Her own people keep that account, sir, I know nothing of her.

Sir Bril. Nay, never talk slightly of a lady who possesses so many elegant accomplishments. She has spirit, sense, wit, and beauty.

Sir Bash. Spirit, sense, wit, and beauty! she has them all sure enough.—Sir, I am no sworn appraiser, to take an inventory of her effects—[*Aside.*] Hey, Lovemore.
[*Looks at him, and laughs.*]

Love. [To Sir Bashful.] Vastly well.

Sir Bril. Is her ladyship visible this morning?

Sir Bash. Whether she is visible, or not, is no business of mine, but I know she is unintelligible this

morning, and incomprehensible this morning. She has the vapours; but your conversation, I suppose, will brighten her up for the rest of the day.

Sir Bril. Why, as it happens, I have the rarest piece of news to communicate to her. Lovemore, you know Sir Amorous la Fool?

Love. He that was Sheriff the other day? Came up with an address, and got himself knighted?

Sir Bril. The same. He declared he would live with his friends upon the same familiar footing as before, and his new dignities should make no alteration.

Sir Bash. I have seen the knight. What of him?

Sir Bril. Poor devil. He is in such a scrape!

Sir Bash. What's the matter? Bubbled at play, I suppose.

Sir Bril. Worse, much worse.

Love. He has been blackballed at one of the clubs?

Sir Bash. Or run through the body in a duel?

Sir Bril. Why that's a scrape indeed; but it is not that.

Sir Bash. What then?

Sir Bril. So unfortunate a discovery; he has fallen in love—I cannot help laughing at him.

Love. Po! fallen in love with some coquette, who plays off her airs, and makes a jest of him.

Sir Bash. A young actress, may be, or an opera singer?

Sir Bril. No, you will never guess. Sir Bashful, —like a silly devil, he is fallen in love with his own wife.

Sir Bash. Fallen in love with his own wife?

[*Stares at him.*]

Sir Bril. Yes; he has made up all quarrels; his jealousy is at an end, and he is to be upon his good behaviour for the rest of his life.—Could you expect this, Lovemore?

Love. No, sir; neither I, nor my friend, Sir Bashful, expected this.

Sir Bash. It is a stroke of surprise to me.

[*Looking uneasy.*]

Sir Bril. I heard it at my Lady Betty Scandal's, and we had such a laugh : the whole company were in astonishment ; whist stood still, quadrille laid down the cards, and brag was in suspense. Poor Sir Amorous ! it is very ridiculous, is not it, Sir Bashful ?

Sir Bash. Very ridiculous indeed.—[*Aside.*] My own case exactly, and my friend Lovemore's too.

Sir Bril. The man is lost, undone, ruined, dead and buried.

Love. [*Laughing.*] He will never be able to shew his face after this discovery.

Sir Bril. Oh, never ; 'tis all over with him. Sir Bashful, this does not divert you ; you don't enjoy it.

Sir Bash. Who I ?—I—I—nothing can be more pleasant, and—I—laugh as heartily as I possibly can.
[*Forcing a laugh.*]

Sir Bril. Lovemore, you remember Sir Amorous used to strut, and talk big, and truly he did not care a pinch of snuff for his wife, not he ! pretended to be as much at ease as Sir Bashful about his lady, and as much his own master as you-yourself, or any man of pleasure about town.

Love. I remember him : but as to Sir Bashful and myself, we know the world ; we understand life.

Sir Bash. So we do ; the world will never have such a story of us. Will they, Lovemore ?

Love. Oh ! we are free : we are out of the scrape.

Sir Bril. Sir Amorous la Fool will be a proverb. Adieu for him the side-box whisper, the soft assignation, and all the joys of freedom. He is retired with his Penelope to love one another in the country ; and next winter they will come to town to hate one another.

Sir Bash. Do you think it will end so ?

Sir Bril. No doubt of it. That is always the *dénouement* of modern matrimony. But I have not told you the worst of his case. Our friend, Sir Charles Wildfire, you know, was writing a comedy, and what do you think he has done ? He has drawn the

character of Sir Amorous, and made him the hero of the play.

Sir Bash. What, put him into a comedy?

Sir Bril. Even so: it is called 'The Amorous Husband; or, The Man in Love with his own Wife.' Oh! oh! oh! oh!

Love. We must send in time for places.

[*Laughs with Sir Brilliant.*

Sir Bash. Lovemore carries it with an air. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Yes, we must secure places. Sir Bashful, you shall be of the party.

Sir Bash. The party will be very agreeable. I shall enjoy the joke prodigiously. Ha! ha! [*Forces a laugh.*

Love. Yes, Sir Bashful, we shall relish the humour.

[*Looks at him and laughs.*

Sir Bril. The play will have a run: the people of fashion will crowd after such a character.—I must drive to a million of places and put it about; but first, with your leave, Sir Bashful, I will take the liberty to give a hint of the affair to your lady. It will appear so ridiculous to her.

Sir Bash. Do you think it will?

Sir Bril. Without doubt: she has never met with any thing like it: has she, Lovemore?

Love. I fancy not: Sir Bashful, you take care of that.

Sir Bash. Yes, yes; I shall never be the town-talk.—Hey, Lovemore!

Sir Bril. Well, I'll step and pay my respects to my Lady Constant. Poor Sir Amorous! he will have his horns added to his coat of arms in a little time. Ha! ha?

[*Exit.*

Sir Bash. There, you see how it is. I shall get lampooned, be-rhymed, and nixed into a comedy.

Love. Po! never be frightened at this. Nobody knows of your weakness but myself, and I can't betray your secret for my own sake.

Sir Bash. Very true.

Love. This discovery shews the necessity of concealing our loves. We must act with caution. Give

my lady no reason to suspect that you have the least regard for her.

Sir Bash. Not for the world.

Love. Keep to that.

Sir Bash. I have done her a thousand kindnesses, but all by stealth; all in a sly way.

Love. Have you?

Sir Bash. Oh! a multitude. I'll tell you. She has been plaguing me a long time for an addition to her jewels. She wants a diamond cross, and a better pair of diamond buckles. Madam, says I, I will have no such trumpery; but then goes I and bespeaks them of the first jeweller in town.—All under the rose. The buckles are finished: worth five hundred! She will have them this very day, without knowing from what quarter they come—I can't but laugh at the contrivance—the man that brings them will run away directly, without saying a word. [*Laughs heartily.*]

Love. Sly, sly.—You know what you are about.

Sir Bash. Ay, let me alone—[*Laughs with Lovemore.*] And then, to cover the design still more, when I see her wear her baubles, I can take occasion to be as jealous as bedlam.

Love. So you can: ha! ha!—[*Aside.*] I wish he may never be jealous of me in good earnest.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. [*Looks at him, and laughs.*] I am safe, I think.

Love. [*Laughing with him.*] Perfectly safe—[*Aside.*] if it was not for his own folly.

Sir Bash. But I was telling you, Mr. Lovemore:—we can be of essential use to each other.

Love. As how, pray?

Sir Bash. Why, my lady is often in want of money. It would be ridiculous in me to supply her. Now if you will take the money from me, and pretend to lend it to her, out of friendship, you know—

Love. Nothing can be better—[*Aside.*] Here is a fellow pimping for his own horns.—I shall be glad to serve you.

Sir Bash. I am for ever obliged to you—here,

here; take it now—here it is in bank-notes—one, two, three; there is three hundred—give her that, and tell her you have more at her service to-morrow or next day, if her occasions require it.

Love. My good friend, to oblige you. [*Takes the money.*]—This is the rarest adventure!

Sir Bash. I'll do any thing for you in return.

Love. I shall have occasion for your friendship—that is to forgive me, if you find me out. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Lose no time; step to her now—hold, hold; Sir Brilliant is with her.

Love. I can dismiss him. Rely upon my friendship: I will make her ladyship easy for you.

Sir Bash. It will be kind of you.

Love. It shall be her own fault if I don't.

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you—well, is not this the rarest project?

Love. It is the newest way——of satisfying a man's wife!

Sir Bash. Ay! let this head of mine alone.

Love. [*Aside.*] Not if I can help it. Hush!—I hear Sir Brilliant; he is coming down stairs. I'll take this opportunity, and step to her ladyship now.

Sir Bash. Do so, do so.

Love. I am gone.—[*Aside.*] Who can blame me now if I cuckold this fellow? [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. Prosper you, prosper you, Mr. Love-more. Make me thankful: he is a true friend. I don't know what I should do without him.

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, how have you managed this?

Sir Bash. I have no art, no management. What's the matter?

Sir Bril. I don't know what you have done, but your lady laughs till she is ready to expire at what I have been telling her.

Sir Bash. And she thinks Sir Amorous la Fool an object of ridicule?

Sir Bril. She does not give credit to a single syl-

lable of the story. A man that loves his wife would be a Phoenix indeed! Such a thing might exist formerly, but in this polished age is no where to be found. That's her opinion of the matter.

Sir Bash. [*Laughs.*] A whimsical notion of hers! and so she thinks you may go about with a lanthorn to find a man that sets any value upon his wife?

Sir Bril. You have managed to convince her of it. How the devil do you contrive to govern so fine a woman? I know several, without her pretensions, who have long ago thrown off all restraint. You keep up your dignity.

Sir Bash. Yes, I know what I am about.

Sir Bril. You!—you are quite in the fashion.—A-propos; I fancy I shall want you to afford me your assistance. You know my Lady Charlotte Mode-love? She has a taste for the theatre: at Bell-Grove Place she has an elegant stage, where her select friends amuse themselves now and then with a representation of certain comic pieces. We shall there act the new comedy, but we apprehend some difficulty in the arrangement of the several characters. Now you shall act Sir Amorous, and——

Sir Bash. I act, sir!—I know nothing of the character.

Sir Bril. Po! say nothing of that. In time you may reach the ridiculous absurdity of it, and play it as well as another.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Confusion! he does not suspect, I hope—Divert yourselves, sir, as you may; but not at my expence I promise you.

Sir Bril. Never be so abrupt. Who knows but Lady Constant may be the happy wife, the *Cara Sposa* of the piece; and then, you in love with her, and she laughing at you for it, will give a zest to the humour, which every body will relish in the most exquisite degree.

Sir Bash. Po! this is too much. You are very pleasant, but you won't easily get me to play the fool.

Sir Bril. Well, consider of it. I shall be delighted

to see my friend Sir Bashful tied to his wife's apron-string, and with a languishing look melting away in admiration of her charms. Oh, ho, ho, ho!—adieu; *a l'honneur*; good morning, Sir Bashful. [*Exit.*]

Sir Bash. I don't know what to make of all this. But there is no danger. As long as nobody knows it, I may venture to love my wife. There will be no harm, while the secret is kept close as night, concealed in tenfold darkness, from the wits and scoffers of the age.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Sir Bash. Well, well;—how? what have you done?

Love. As I could wish: she is infinitely obliged to me, and will never forget the civility.

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you. I am not suspected?

Love. She has not a distant idea of you in this business. She was rather delicate at first, and hesitated, and thought it an indecorum to accept of money even from a friend. But that objection soon vanished. I told her, it is but too visible that she is unfortunately yoked with a husband, whose humour will never be softened down to the least compliance with her inclinations.

Sir Bash. That was well said, and had a good effect, I hope.

Love. I hope so too.

Sir Bash. It helps to carry on the plot, you know.

Love. Admirably; it puts things in the train I wish.

Sir Bash. And so, to cover the design, you gave me the worst of characters?

Love. I painted you in terrible colours.

Sir Bash. Do so always, and she will never suspect me of being privy to any civility you may shew her.

Love. I would not have you know any thing of my civility to her for the world. [*Aside.*—I have succeeded thus far. I talked a few musty sentences, such as the person who receives a civility confers the obligation, with more jargon to that purpose, and so

with some reluctance she complied at last, and things are now upon the footing I would have them,—Death and fury ! there comes my wife.

Sir Bash. Ay, and here comes my wife.

Love. What the devil brings her hither ?

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Now, now ; now let me see how he will carry it before Mrs. Lovemore.—Walk in madam ! walk in, Mrs. Lovemore.

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE, and Lady CONSTANT, at opposite doors.

Lady Cons. Mrs. Lovemore, to see you abroad is a novelty indeed.

Mrs. Love. As great, perhaps, as that of finding your ladyship at home. Mr. Lovemore, I did not expect to have the pleasure of meeting you.

Love. Then we are both agreeably surprised.

Sir Bash. Now mind how he behaves. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Love. I thought you were gone to your city-banker.

Love. And you find that you are mistaken. I have deferred it till the evening—[*Aside.*] 'Sdeath ! to be teased in this manner.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] No, no ; he won't drop the mask. [*Looks at Lady Constant.*] She has touched the cash ; I can see the bank-notes sparkling in her eye.

Mrs. Love. If you don't go into the city till the evening, may I hope for your company at dinner, Mr. Lovemore ?

Love. The question is entertaining, but as it was settled this morning, I think it has lost the graces of novelty.

Sir Bash. He won't let her have the least suspicion of his regard. [*Aside.*

Lady Cons. I dare say Mr. Lovemore will dine at home, if it conduces to your happiness, ma'am ; and Sir Bashful, I take it, will dine at home for the contrary reason.

Sir Bash. Madam, I will dine at home, or I will

dine abroad, for what reason I please, and it is my pleasure, to give no reason for either.—Lovemore!

[*Looks at him and smiles.*]

Love. [*Aside to Sir Bashful.*] Bravo!—What a blockhead it is?

Mrs. Love. As you have your chariot at the door, Mr. Lovemore, if you have no objection, I will send away my chair, and you may do me the honour of a place in your carriage.

Love. The honour will be very great to me, but—so many places to call at.—If I had known this sooner—You had better keep your chair.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Cunning! cunning! he would not be seen in his chariot with her for the world. He has more discretion than I have.

Lady Cons. Mrs. Lovemore, since you have, at last, ventured to come abroad, I hope you will think it a change for the better. You are too domestic. I shall expect now to see you often; and, a-propos, I am to have a rout to-morrow evening; if you will do me the honour of your company—

Sir Bash. A rout to-morrow evening! you have a rout every evening, I think. Learn of Mrs. Lovemore, imitate her example, and don't let me have your hurricane months all the year round in my house.—Hip! [*Aside.*] Lovemore, how do you like me?

Love. [*Aside to Sir Bashful.*] You improve upon it every time. But I am loitering here as if I had nothing to do.—My lady Constant, I have the honour to wish your ladyship a good morning. Sir Bashful, yours—madam.

[*Bows gravely to Mrs. Lovemore, hums a tune, and exit.*]

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] He knows how to play the game. I'll try what I can do. Mrs. Lovemore, I have the honour to wish you a good morning. Madam—

[*Bows gravely to Lady Constant, hums a tune, and exit.*]

Mrs. Love. Two such husbands!

Lady Cons. As to my swain, I grant you: Mr. Lovemore is, at least, well bred; he has an understanding, and may in time reflect. Sir Bashful never qualifies himself with the smallest tincture of civility.

Mrs. Love. If civility can qualify the draught, I must allow Mr. Lovemore to have a skilful hand. But there is no end to his projects. Every day opens a new scene. Another of his intrigues is come to light. I came to consult with your ladyship. I know you are acquainted with the widow Bellmour.

Lady Cons. The widow Bellmour! I know her perfectly well.

Mrs. Love. Not so well, perhaps, as you may imagine. She has thrown out the lure for my wild gallant, and in order to deceive me——

Lady Cons. My dear, you must be mistaken. Who tells you this?

Mrs. Love. Oh! I can trust to my intelligence. Sir Brilliant Fashion, by way of blind to me, has been this morning drawing so amiable a picture of the lady——

Lady Cons. Sir Brilliant's authority is not always the best, but in this point you may trust to him.

Mrs. Love. But when you have heard all the circumstances——

Lady Cons. Depend upon it, you are wrong. I know the widow Bellmour. Her turn of character, and way of thinking——

Mrs. Love. Excuse me, madam. You decide without hearing me.

Lady Cons. All scandal, take my word for it. However, let me hear your story. We'll adjourn to my dressing-room, if you will; and I promise to confute all you can say.—I would have you know the widow Bellmour: you will be in love with her.—My dear madam, have not you a tinge of jealousy?—Beware of that malady. If you see things through that medium, I shall give you up.

*That jaundice of the mind, whose colours strike
On friends and foe, and paint them all alike,*

ACT III. SCENE I.

An Apartment at the Widow BELLMOUR's: several Chairs, a Toilette, a Book-Case, and a Harpsichord, disposed up and down. MIGNIONET putting things in order.

Mignionet. I DON'T well know what to make of this same Lord Etheridge. He is coming here again to-day, I suppose: all this neatness, and all this care, must be for him.—Well, it does not signify: [*Arranging the chairs.*] there is a pleasure in obeying Madam Bellmour. She is a sweet lady, that's the truth of it.—'Twere a pity if any of these men, with their deceitful arts, should draw her into a snare.—But she knows them all: they must rise early who can outwit her. [*Settling the toilette.*]

Enter Mrs. BELLMOUR, reading.

*Oh! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
Can make to-morrow chearful as to-day;
She who can own a sister's charms, and hear
Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear;
That never answers till a husband cools,
And if she rules him, never shews she rules.*

Sensible, elegant Pope!

*Charms by accepting, by submitting sways;
Yet has her humour most, when she obeys.*

[*Seems to read on.*]

Mign. Lord love my mistress! always so charming, so gay, and so happy!

Mrs. Bell. These exquisite characters of women! they are a sort of painter's gallery, where one sees the portraits of all one's acquaintance, and sometimes we see our own features too. Mignionet, put this book in its place.

Mign. Yes, ma'am; and there's your toilette looks as elegant as hands can make it.

Mrs. Bell. Does it? I think it does. You have some taste. A-propos, where is my new song?——Oh!

here it is : I must make myself mistress of it. [*Plays upon the harpsichord, and sings a little.*] I believe I have conquered it. [*Rises, and goes to her toilette.*] This hair is always tormenting me, always in disorder : this lock must be for ever gadding out of its place. I must and will subdue it.—Do you know, Mignonet, that this is a pretty song ? It was writ by my Lord Etheridge. My lord has a turn. [*Sings a little.*] I must be perfect before he comes. [*Humms the tune.*] Do you know that I think my lord is one of those men who may be endured ?

Mign. Yes, ma'am, I know you think so.

Mrs. Bell. Do you ?

Mign. And if I have any skill, ma'am, you are not without a little partiality for his lordship.

Mrs. Bell. Really ? Then you think I like him, perhaps. Do you think I like him ? I don't well know how that is. Like him ! no, not absolutely : it is not decided : and yet I don't know, if I had a mind to humour myself, and to give way a little to inclination, there is something here in my heart that would be busy, I believe.—The man has a softness of manner, a turn of wit, and does not want sentiment. Can I call it sentiment ? Yes, I think I may. He has sentiment ; and then he knows the manners, the usage of the world, and he points out the ridicule of things with so much humour !

Mign. You'll be caught, ma'am, I see that——To be sure, my lord has a quality-air, and can make himself agreeable. But what of that ? You know but very little of him. Is a man's character known in three or four weeks time ? [*Mrs. Bellmour hums a tune.*] Do, my dear madam, mind what I say : I am at times very considerate. I make my remarks, and I see very plainly——Lord, ma'am, what am I doing ? I am talking to you for your own good, and you are all in the air, and no more mind me ; no, no more than if I was nothing at all.

Mrs. Bell. [*Continues humming a tune.*] You talk wonderfully well upon the subject ; but as I know

how the cards lie, and can play the best of the game; and as I have a song to amuse me, one is inclined to give musical nonsense the preference.

Mign. I assure you, ma'am, I am not one of those servants that bargain for their mistress's inclination: but you are going to take a leap in the dark. What does my Lord Etheridge mean, with his chair always brought into the hall, and the curtains close about his ears? Why does he not come like himself, and not care who sees him. There's some mystery at the bottom, I'll be sworn there is; and so you'll find at last.—Dear heart, ma'am, if you are determined not to listen, what signifies my living with you? At this rate, I am of no service to you.

Mrs. Bell. There;—I have conquered my song.—*[Runs to her glass.]* How do I look to-day? The eyes do well enough, I think.—And so, Mignonet, you imagine I shall play the fool, and marry my Lord Etheridge?

Mign. You have it through the very heart of you: I see that.

Mrs. Bell. Do you?—I don't know what to say to it. Poor Sir Brilliant Fashion! if I prefer his rival, what will become of him!—I won't think about it.

Enter POMPEY.

Mrs. Bell. What's the matter, Pompey?

Pom. A lady in a chair desires to know if your ladyship is at home.

Mrs. Bell. Has the lady no name.

Pom. Yes; I fancy she has, ma'am; but she did not tell it.

Mrs. Bell. How awkward!—well, shew the lady up stairs.

Mign. Had you not better receive her in the drawing-room, ma'am? I have not half done my business here.

Mrs. Bell. Oh! you have done very well. There will be less formality here. I dare say it is some intimate acquaintance, though that foolish boy does

not recollect her name. Here she comes. I don't know her.

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE.

Mrs. Love. [*Disconcerted.*] I beg pardon for this intrusion.

Mrs. Bell. Pray walk in, ma'am. Mignonet, reach a chair.

[*Mrs. Lovemore crosses the stage, and they salute each other with an air of distant civility.*]

Mrs. Love. I am afraid this visit from one who has not the honour of knowing you——

Mrs. Bell. Oh, make no apology, ma'am.—Mignonet, you may withdraw. [*Exit Mignonet.*]

Mrs. Love. It may appear extraordinary that a stranger thus intrudes upon you; but a particular circumstance determined me to take this liberty. I hope you will excuse the freedom.

Mrs. Bell. You do me honour, ma'am; pray, no excuses. A particular circumstance, you say?

Mrs. Love. I shall appear, perhaps, very ridiculous; and, indeed, I am afraid I have done the most absurd thing; but a lady of your acquaintance—you know my Lady Constant, ma'am?

Mrs. Bell. Extremely well.

Mrs. Love. She has given you such an amiable character for benevolence, and a certain elegant way of thinking, entirely your own, that I flatter myself if it is in your power, you will be generous enough to afford me your assistance.

Mrs. Bell. Lady Constant is very obliging. Make a trial of me, ma'am, and if I can be of any use——

Mrs. Love. I fear I shall ask you a strange question:—are you acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Lovemore?

Mrs. Bell. Lovemore? No such name on my list. Lovemore! No;—I recollect no such person. The circle of my acquaintance is small: I am almost a stranger in town.

Mrs. Love. That makes an end, ma'am. I beg

your pardon. I have given you an unnecessary trouble. [Going.]

Mrs. Bell. [Aside.] Mighty odd this! her manner is interesting.—You have given me no trouble, but my curiosity is excited. [Takes her by the hand.] I beg you will keep your chair. Pray be seated.—What can this mean? [Aside.]—Will you be so good as to inform me who the gentleman is?

Mrs. Love. The story will be uninteresting to you, and to me it is painful. My grievances—[Puts her handkerchief to her eyes.]

Mrs. Bell. [Aside.] Her grief affects me. [Looks at her till she has recovered herself.] I would not importune too much—

Mrs. Love. You have such an air of frankness and generosity, that I will open myself without reserve: I have the tenderest regard for Mr. Lovemore: I have been married to him these two years. I admired his understanding, his sensibility, and his spirit. My heart was his: I loved him with unbounded passion. I thought the flame was mutual, and you may believe I was happy. But of late there is such a revolution in his temper: I know not what to make of it. I am doomed to be unhappy.

Mrs. Bell. Perhaps not: you may still have much in your power.

Mrs. Love. My power is at an end. Instead of the looks of affection, and the expressions of tenderness, with which he used to meet me, it is nothing now but cold, averted superficial civility; while abroad, he runs on in a wild career of pleasure, and to my deep affliction, has attached himself entirely to another object.

Mrs. Bell. And if I had known Mr. Lovemore, do you imagine that my advice or persuasion would avail you any thing?

Mrs. Love. I had such a fancy.—[Aside.] What can I think of her!

Mrs. Bell. You are much mistaken. In these cases friends may interpose, but what can they do? They

recommend a wife to the good-will, the honour, and generosity of her husband. But when a woman, who should be esteemed and loved, is recommended as an object of compassion, she is humbled indeed: it is all over with her. A wife should recommend herself by the graces of her person, and the variety of her talents. Men will prove false; and if there is nothing in your complaint but mere gallantry on his side, I protest I do not see that your case is so very bad.

Mrs. Love. Can it be worse, ma'am?

Mrs. Bell. A great deal.—If his affections, instead of being alienated, had been extinguished, what would be the consequence?—A downright, sullen, habitual insensibility. From that lethargy of affection a man is not easily recalled. In all Love's bill of mortality there is not a more fatal disorder. But this is not the case with Mr. Lovemore: by your account, he still has sentiment; and where there is sentiment, there is room to hope for an alteration.—But where the heart has lost its feeling, you have the pain of finding yourself neglected; and for what?—the man has grown stupid, and to the warm beams of wit and beauty as impenetrable as an ice-house.

Mrs. Love. That is not my complaint. I have to do with one, who is too susceptible of impressions from every beautiful object that comes in his way.

Mrs. Bell. Why, so much the better. A new idea strikes his fancy. He is inconstant; but after wavering and fluttering, he may settle at last.

Mrs. Love. How light she makes of it! she apologizes for him!

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Bell. And, perhaps, the fault is on the woman's side—

Mrs. Love. The virtue of my conduct, madam—

Mrs. Bell. Oh! I would have laid my life you would be at that work. But virtue is not the question at present. I suppose virtue; that is always understood. The fault I mean is the want of due attention to the art of pleasing. It is there that most women fail. In these times, virtue may be its own re-

ward. Virtue alone cannot please the taste of the age. It is *la belle nature*, virtue embellished by the advantages of art, that men expect now-a-days. That is the whole affair: I would not make myself uneasy, ma'am.

Mrs. Love. Not uneasy, when his indifference does not diminish my regard for him! Not uneasy, when the man I dote upon no longer fixes his happiness at home!

Mrs. Bell. Give me leave to speak my mind freely. I have observed, when the fiend jealousy is roused, that women lay out a wonderful deal of anxiety and vexation to no account; when, perhaps, if the truth were known, they should be angry with themselves instead of their husbands.

Mrs. Love. Angry with myself, madam! Calumny can lay nothing to my charge.

Mrs. Bell. There again now! that is the folly of us all.

Mrs. Love. And after being married so long, and behaving all the time with such an equality!

Mrs. Bell. Ay, that equality is the rock so many split upon. The men will change. Excuse my freedom. They are so immersed in luxury, that they must have eternal variety in their happiness.

Mrs. Love. She justifies him! [Aside.]

Mrs. Bell. Your case may not be desperate: I would venture to lay a pot of coffee, that the person who now rivals you in your husband's affections, does it without your good qualities, and even without your beauty, by the mere force of agreeable talents, and some skill in the art of pleasing.

Mrs. Love. I am afraid that compliment——

Mrs. Bell. If I judge right, you are entitled to it. Let me ask you: Do you know this formidable rival?

Mrs. Love. There, I own, I am puzzled.

Mrs. Bell. What sort of a woman is she?

Mrs. Love. Formidable indeed: she has been described to me as one of charming and rare accomplishments.

Mrs. Bell. Never throw up the cards for all that. Take my advice, ma'am. You seem to have qualities that may dispute your husband's heart with any body; but the exertion of those amiable qualities, I fear, may be suppressed. Excuse my frankness. You should counteract your rival by the very arts which she employs against you. I know a lady now in your very situation: and what does she do? She consumes herself with unceasing jealousy; whereas, if she would exert but half the pains she uses in teasing herself, to vie with the person who has won her husband from her; to vie with her, I say, in the art of pleasing—for there it is a woman's pride should be piqued—Would she do that, take my word for it, victory would declare in her favour. You are not without attractions; give them their energy, and you conquer.

Mrs. Love. Do you think so, ma'am?

Mrs. Bell. Think so! I am sure of it. You must exert yourself. It is the wife's business to bait the hook for her husband with variety. Virtue alone, by her own native charms would do, if the men were perfect. But it is otherwise; and since vice can assume allurements, why should not truth and innocence have additional ornaments also?

Mrs. Love. I find Sir Brilliant has told me truth.

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Bell. Give me leave, ma'am: I have been married, and am a little in the secret. To win a heart is easy; to keep it is the difficulty. After the fatal words, 'for better, for worse,' women relax into indolence, and while they are guilty of no infidelity, they think every thing safe. But they are mistaken: a great deal is wanting; an address, a vivacity, a desire to please; the agreeable contrast; the sense that pleases, the folly that charms.—A favourite poet, PRIOR, has express'd it with delicacy:

*Above the fix'd and settled rules
Of vice and virtue in the schools,
The better part should set before 'em
A grace, a manner, a decorum.*

Mrs. Love. But when the natural temper——

Mrs. Bell. Oh! the natural temper must be forced. Home must be made a place of pleasure to the husband. How is that to be done? That equality which you talk of, is a sameness, that palls and wearies. A wife should throw infinite variety into her manner. She should, as it were, multiply herself, and be, as it were, sundry different women on different occasions: the tender, the affectionate, the witty, the silent; all in their turns; all shifting the scene, and she succeeding to herself as quick as lightning. And this I take to be the whole mystery; the way to keep a man.—But I beg your pardon. I go on too fast: you will think me the giddiest creature.

Mrs. Love. Quite the reverse, ma'am: you are very obliging.

Mrs. Bell. I have tired myself and you too.—But pray, may I now enquire, who was so kind as to intimate that I am acquainted with Mr. Lovemore?

Mrs. Love. It was a mere mistake. I have given you a great deal of trouble. You will excuse my frankness: I had heard that his visits were frequent here.

Mrs. Bell. His visits frequent here! My Lady Constant could not tell you so?

Mrs. Love. She told me quite the contrary. She knows your amiable qualities, and does you justice.

Mrs. Bell. The accident is lucky; it has procured me the honour of your acquaintance. And I suppose you imagine that I had robbed you of Mr. Lovemore's heart?—Scandal will be buzzing about. I can laugh at every thing of that sort. [*A rap at the door.*] Oh! Heavens! some troublesome visit.— [*Rings a bell.*]

Enter MIGNIONET.

Mrs. Bell. I am not at home. Go and give an answer.

Mign. It is Lord Etheridge, ma'am: he is coming up stairs. The servants did not know you had changed your mind.

Mrs. Bell. Was ever any thing so cross? Tell his lordship I have company; I am busy; I am not well; any thing, don't let him come in. Make haste, dispatch: I won't see him.

Mrs. Love. I beg I may not hinder you: I shall take my leave.

Mrs. Bell. By no means. Our conversation grows interesting. I positively will not see my lord.

Mrs. Love. I can't agree to that. You must see his lordship. I can step into another room.

Mrs. Bell. Will you be so good—You will find something to amuse you in that cabinet. [*Points to a door in the back scene.*] We must talk farther. My lord sha'n't stay long.

Mrs. Love. Nay, but if you stand upon ceremony—

Mrs. Bell. Very well: I'll contrive it. This is a lover of mine. A lover and a husband are the same thing. Perhaps it will divert you to hear how I manage him. I hear him on the stairs. Make haste: Mignonet, shew the way.

[*Mrs. Love, and Mignonet go out at the back scene.*]

Mrs. Bell. Let me see how I look to receive him.

[*Runs to her glass.*]

Enter LOVEMORE, with a Star and Garter, as Lord ETHERIDGE.

Love. *A heavenly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears,
Repairs her smiles—*

Mrs. Bell. Repairs her smiles, my lord. You are satirical, this morning. Pray, my lord, are my features out of repair, like an old house in the country, that wants a tenant?

Love. Nay, now you wrest my words from their visible intention. You can't suppose that I impute to such perfect beauty the least want of repair, whatever may be the case, ma'am, with regard to the want of a tenant.

Mrs. Bell. Oh! then your opinion is, that I want a tenant. And perhaps you think I am going to put

up a bill to signify to all passers by, that here is a mansion to be let, enquire of the widow Bellinour. I like your notion; I don't think it would be a bad scheme. Shall I try it?

Love. A palace needs no such invitation. Its natural beauty attracts admiring eyes. But who can bid up to the price? The person who is able to do it——

Mrs. Bell. Will be happy; I know that is what you are going to say. But he must do homage for it; and then I will let it to none but a single gentleman. Do you know any body whom these conditions will suit?

Love. Those conditions, ma'am—[*Aside.*] What the devil does she mean? I am not detected, I hope——To be sure, ma'am, those conditions—And——none but single gentlemen will presume to——

Mrs. Bell. And then it must be a lease for life. But that will never do; nobody will be troubled with it. I shall never get it off my hands: do you think I shall, my lord?

Love. There must be very little taste left, if you have not a number of bidders. You know the ambition of my heart; you know I am devoted to you upon any terms, even though it were to be bought with life.

Mrs. Bell. Heavens! what a dying swain you are! And does your lordship mean to be guilty of matrimony? Lord, what a question have I asked! To be sure, I am the giddiest creature. My lord, don't you think me a strange-madcap?

Love. A vein of wit, like yours, that springs at once from vivacity and sentiment, serves to exalt your beauty, and give animation to every charm.

Mrs. Bell. Upon my word, you have said it finely! But you are in the right, my lord. Your pensive melancholy beauty is the most insipid thing in nature. And yet we often see features without a mind; and the owner of them sits in the room with you, like

a mere vegetable, for an hour together, till, at last, she is incited to the violent exertion of, 'Yes, sir,'—'I fancy not, ma'am;' and then a matter of fact conversation—'Miss Beverly is going to be married to Captain Shoulder-knot—My Lord Mortgage has had another tumble at hazard—Sir Harry Wilding has lost his election—They say short aprons are coming into fashion.

Love. Oh! a matter of fact conversation is unsupportable.

Mrs. Bell. But you meet with nothing else. All in great spirits about nothing, and not an idea among them. Go to Ranelagh, or to what public place you will, it is just the same. A lady comes up to you; 'How charmingly you look!—But my dear m'em, did you hear what happened to us the other night? We were going home from the opera—you know my aunt Roly Poly; it was her coach. There was she and Lady Betty Fidget—What a sweet blonde! How do you do my dear? [*Curtsyng as to another going by.*] My Lady Betty is quite recovered; we were all frightened about her: but Doctor Snake-root was called in; no, not Doctor Snake-root, Doctor Bolus; and so he altered the course of the medicines, and so my Lady Betty is purely now.—Well, there was she, and my aunt, and Sir George Bragwell—a pretty man Sir George—finest teeth in the world—Your ladyship's most obedient—[*Curtsyng.*] We expected you last night, but you did not come.—He! he! he!—and so there was Sir George and the rest of us, and so, turning the corner of Bond-street, the brute of a coachman—I humbly thank your grace [*Curtsies.*]—the brute of a coachman overturned us, and so my aunt Roly Poly was frightened out of her wits; and Lady Betty has had her nerves again. Only think! such accidents!—I am glad to see you look so well; *a l'honneur;* he! he! he!

Love. Ho! ho! you paint to the life. I see her moving before me in all her airs.

Mrs. Bell. With this conversation their whole

stock is exhausted, and away they run to cards. Quadrille has murdered wit!

Love. Ay, and beauty too. Cards are the worst enemies to a complexion: the small pox is not so bad. The passions throw themselves into every feature: I have seen the countenance of an angel changed, in a moment, to absolute deformity: the little loves and graces that sparkled in the eye, bloomed in the cheek, and smiled about the mouth, all wing their flight, and leave the face, which they before adorned, a prey to grief, to anger, malice, and fury, and the whole train of fretful passions.

Mrs. Bell. And the language of the passions is sometimes heard upon those occasions.

Love. Very true, ma'am; and if, by chance, they do bridle and hold in a little, the struggle they undergo is the most ridiculous sight in nature. I have seen a huge oath quivering on the pale lip of a reigning toast for half an hour together, and an uplifted eye accusing the gods for the loss of an odd trick. And then at last, the whole room in a Babel of sounds. 'My lord, you flung away the game.—Sir George, why did not you rough the spade?—Captain Hazard, why did not you lead through the honours?—Ma'am, it was not the play—Pardon me, sir—but ma'am,—but sir—I would not play with you for straws: don't you know what Hoyle says?—If A and B are partners against C and D, and the game nine all, A and B have won three tricks, and C and D four tricks; C leads his suit, D puts up the king, then returns the suit; A passes, C puts up the queen, and B trumps it; and so A and B, and C and D are banded about; they attack, they defend, and all is jargon and confusion, wrangling, noise, and nonsense; and high life, and polite conversation.—Ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Bell. Ho! ho! the pencil of Hogarth could not do it better. And yet one is dragged to these places. One must play sometimes. We must let

our friends pick our pockets now and then, or they drop our acquaintance. Do you ever play, my lord?

Love. Play, ma'am——[*Aside.*] What does she mean? I must play the hypocrite to the end of the chapter.——Play?—Now and then, as you say, one must, to oblige, and from necessity; but from taste, or inclination, no; I never touch a card.

Mrs. Bell. Oh! very true; I forgot. You dedicate your time to the muses; a downright rhyming peer. Do you know, my lord, that I am charmed with your song?

Love. Are you?

Mrs. Bell. Absolutely; and I really think you would make an admirable Vauxhall poet.

Love. Nay, now you flatter me.

Mrs. Bell. No, as I live: it is very pretty. And do you know that I can sing it already? Come, you, shall hear how I murder it. I have no voice to-day, but you shall hear me. [Sings.

*Attend all ye fair, and I'll tell you the art,
To bind ev'ry fancy with ease in your chains;
To hold in soft fetters the conjugal heart,
And banish from HYMEN his doubts and his pains.*

*When Juno was deck'd with the Cestus of Love,
At first she was handsome; she charming became;
With skill the soft passions it taught her to move,
To kindle at once, and to keep up the flame.*

*'Tis this gives the eyes all their magic and fire,
The voice-melting accents; impassions the kiss;
Confers the sweet smile that awakens desire,
And plants round the fair each incentive to bliss.*

*Thence flows the gay chat, more than reason that
charms;*

*The eloquent blush, that can beauty improve;
The fond sigh, the fond vow, the soft touch that alarms;
The tender disdain, the renewal of love.*

Ye fair, take the Cestus, and practise its power:

*The mind unaccomplish'd, mere features are vain;
With wit,—with good humour, enliven each hour,
And the loves, and the graces, shall walk in your train.*

Love. My poetry is infinitely obliged to you. It grows into sense as you sing it. Your voice, like the Cestus of Venus, bestows a grace upon every thing.

Mrs. Bell. Oh! fulsome; I sing horridly! [*Goes to the glass*] How do I look?—Don't tell me, my lord: you are studying a compliment, but I am resolved to mortify you; I won't hear it.—Well! have you thought of any thing? Let it pass; tis too late now. Pray, my lord, how came you to choose so grave a subject as connubial happiness?

Love. Close and particular that question. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Bell. Juno! Hymen! doubts and pains! one would almost swear that you had a wife at home who sat for the picture.

Love. Ma'am, the——[*Embarrassed.*] The compliment——you are only laughing at me——the subject, from every day's experience——[*Aside.*] Does she suspect me?——the subject is common——Bachelor's wives, you know——ha! ha!——And when you inspire the thought; when you are the bright original, it is no wonder that the copy——

Mrs. Bell. Horrid! going to harp on the old string. Odious solicitations! I hate all proposals. I am not in the humour. You must release me now: your visit is rather long. I have indulged you a great while. And besides, were I to listen to your vows, what would become of poor Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Love. Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Mrs. Bell. Do you know him?

Love. I know whom you mean. I have seen him; but that's all. He lives with a strange set, and does not move in my sphere. If he is a friend of yours, I have no more to say.

Mrs. Bell. Is there any thing to say against him?

Love. Nay, I have no knowledge of the gentleman. They who know him best, don't rate him high. A sort of a current coin that passes in this town. You will do well to beware of counterfeits.

Mrs. Bell. But this is very alarming——

Enter MIGNIONET, in a violent Hurry.

Mign. My dear madam, I am frightened out of my senses. The poor lady——where are the hartshorn drops?

Love. The lady! what lady?

Mign. Never stand asking what lady. She has fainted away all on a sudden: she is now in strong hysterics: give me the drops.

Mrs. Bell. I must run to her assistance. Adieu, my lord. I shall be at home in the evening. Mignionet, step this way. Your lordship will excuse me: I shall expect to see you. Come, Mignionet, make haste; make haste. [*Exit with Mignionet.*]

Love. I hope the lady has not overheard me. What a villain am I to carry on this scheme against so much beauty, innocence, and merit! And to wear this badge of honour for the darkest purposes! And then my friend, Sir Brilliant, will it be fair to supplant him?——Pr'ythee, be quiet, my dear conscience! none of your meddling: don't interrupt a gentleman in his pleasures. Don't you know, my good friend, that love has no respect for persons, but soars above all laws of honour and of friendship? No reflection; have her I must, and that quickly too, or she will discover all. Besides, this is my wife's fault: why does not she make home agreeable? I am willing to be happy; I could be constant to her, but she is not formed for happiness. What the devil is Madam Fortune about now?——[*Sir Brilliant sings within.*] Sir Brilliant, by all that's infamous. Confusion! no place to hide me? no escape? The door is locked. Mignionet, Mignionet, open the door.

Mign. [*Within*] You must not come in here.

Love. What shall I do? This star, and this ribbon will bring me to disgrace. Away with this tell-tale evidence, [*Takes off the ribbon.*] Go, thou blushing devil, and hide thyself for ever.

[*Puts it in his pocket.*]

Enter Sir BRILLANT, singing.

Sir Bril. Mrs. Bellmour, I have such a story for you.—How!—Lovemore?

Love. Your slave, Sir Brilliant, your slave.

[*Hiding the star with his hat.*]

Sir Bril. I did not think you had been acquainted here.

Love. You are right. I came in quest of you. I saw the lady. I was drawn hither by mere curiosity. We have had some conversation; and I made it subservient to your purposes. I have been giving a great character of you.

Sir Bril. You are always at the service of your friends. But what's the matter? what are you fumbling about?

[*Pulls the hat.*]

Love. 'Sdeath! have care: don't touch me.

[*Puts his handkerchief to his breast.*]

Sir Bril. What the devil is the matter?

Love. Oh! keep off—[*Aside.*] Here's a business.—Taken in the old way; let me pass.—I have had a fling at Lord Etheridge: he will be out of favour with the widow: I have done you that good.—Racks and torments, my old complaint!

[*Wanting to pass him.*]

Sir Bril. What complaint? You had better sit down.

Love. No, no; air, the air. I must have a surgeon. A stroke of a tennis-ball! My Lord Rackett's unlucky left-hand. Let me pass. There is something forming here. [*Passes him.*] To be caught is the devil. [*Aside.*] Don't mention my name. You will counteract all I have said.—Oh! torture, torture!—I will explain to you another time. Sir Brilliant, yours. I have served your interest—Oh! there is certainly something forming.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Bril. What does all this mean?—So, so, Mrs. Lovemore's suspicions are well founded.—The widow has her private visits, I see. Yes, yes; there is something forming here.

Enter Mrs. BELLMOUR.

So; here she comes. The whole shall be explained. I hope, ma'am, that I don't interrupt you with any piquet friend.

Mrs. Bell. You are always a torment: what brings you hither?

Sir Bril. There are times, ma'am, when a visit—

Mrs. Bell. Is unseasonable, and yours is so now. How can you tease me?

Sir Bril. I thought as much.—There are some things that may require to be discussed between us.

Mrs. Bell. Reserve them all for another time. I can't hear you now. You must leave me. There is a lady taken ill in the next room.

Sir Bril. And here has been a gentleman taken ill in this room.

Mrs. Bell. How troublesome! you must be gone, Do you dispute my will and pleasure?—Fly this moment.

Sir Bril. But ma'am—Nay, if you insist upon it—
[*Goes.*]

Mrs. Bell. But sir!—I will be absolute: you must leave me. [*Puts him out.*] There, and now I'll make sure of the door.

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE, leaning on MIGNIONET.

Mign. This way, madam: here is more air in this room.

Mrs. Bell. How do you find yourself. Pray sit down.

Mrs. Love. My spirits were too weak. I could not support it any longer; such a scene of perfidy!

Mrs. Bell. You astonish me: what perfidy?

Mrs. Love. Perfidy of the blackest dye; I told you that you were acquainted with my husband!

Mrs. Bell. Acquainted with your husband!

[*Angrily.*

Mrs. Love. A moment's patience—Yes, madam, you are acquainted with him.—The base man who went hence but now—

Mrs. Bell. Sir Brilliant Fashion?

Mrs. Love. No, your Lord Etheridge, as he calls himself—

Mrs. Bell. Lord Etheridge? What of him, pray?

Mrs. Love. False, dissembling man! he is my husband, ma'am: not Lord Etheridge, but plain Mr. Lovemore; my Mr. Lovemore.

Mrs. Bell. And has he been base enough to assume a title to ensnare me to my undoing?

Mign. [*Going.*] Well, for certain, I believe the devil's in me: I always thought him a sly one. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Love. To see him carrying on this dark design,—to see the man whom I have ever esteemed and loved,—the man whom I must still love,—esteem him, I fear, I never can,—to see him before my face with that artful treachery! it was too much for sensibility like mine; I felt the shock too severely, and I sunk under it.

Mrs. Bell. I am ready to sink this moment with amazement. I saw him, for the first time, at old Mrs. Loveit's. She introduced him to me. The appointment was of her own making.

Mrs. Love. You know Mrs. Loveit's character, I suppose.

Mrs. Bell. The practised veteran!—Could I suspect that a woman, in her stile of life, would lend herself to a vile stratagem against my honour? That she would join in a conspiracy against her own sex?—Mr. Lovemore shall never enter these doors again—I am obliged to you, ma'am, for this visit; to me a providential incident. I am sorry for your share in it. The discovery secures my peace and happiness; to you it is a fatal conviction, a proof unanswerable against the person to whom you are joined for life.

Mrs. Love. After this discovery, it cannot be for life. I am resolved not to pass another day under his roof.

Mrs. Bell. Hold, hold; no sudden resolutions. Consider a little: passion is a bad adviser. This may take a turn for your advantage.

Mrs. Love. That can never be: I am lost beyond redemption.

Mrs. Bell. Don't decide too rashly. Come, come, the man who has certain qualities, is worth thinking about, before one throws the hideous thing away for ever. Mr. Lovemore is a traitor; but is not he still amiable: And besides, you have heard his sentiments. That song points at something. Perhaps you are a little to blame. He did not write upon such a subject, without a cause to suggest it. We will talk over this matter coolly. You have saved me, and I must return the obligation. You shall stay dinner with me.

Mrs. Love. Excuse me. Mr. Lovemore may possibly go home. He shall hear of his guilt, while the sense of it pierces here, and wounds me to the quick.

Mrs. Bell. Now there you are wrong; take my advice first. I will lay such a plan as may insure him yours for ever. Come, come, you must not leave me yet. [*Takes her hand.*] Answer me one question: don't you still think he has qualities that do in some sort apologize for his vices?

Mrs. Love. I don't know what to think of it: I hope he has.

Mrs. Bell. Very well then. I have lost a lover; you may gain one. Your conduct upon this occasion may reform him; and let me tell you that the man, who has it in his power to atone for his faults, should not be entirely despised.—Let the wife exert herself; let her try her powers of pleasing, and take my word for it,

*The wild gallant no more abroad will roam,
But find his lov'd variety at home.* [Exit.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

An Apartment in LOVEMORE's House. Mr. and Mrs. LOVEMORE at Table after Dinner: Servants taking Things out of the Room.

Lovemore. [*Filling a glass.*] I WONDER you are not tired of the same eternal topic.

[*Sipping his wine.*

Mrs. Love. If I make it an eternal topic, it is for your own good, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I know I have your good wishes, and you have mine. All our absent friends, Mrs. Lovemore.

[*Drinks.*

Mrs. Love. If you would but wish well to yourself, sir, I should be happy.—But in the way you go on, your health must be ruined; day is night, and night day; your substance squandered; your constitution destroyed; and your family quite neglected.

Love. Family neglected! you see I dined at home, and this is my reward for it.

Mrs. Love. You dined at home, sir, because something abroad has disconcerted you. You went, I suppose, after I saw you at Lady Constant's, to your old haunt, your friend, Mrs. Loveit—

Love. Mrs. Loveit! ha! ha! I dropt her acquaintance long ago. No, my love, I drove into the city, and spent the rest of the morning upon business. I had long accounts to settle with old Discount the banker.

Mrs. Love. And that to be sure engrossed all your time. Business must be minded. Did you find him at home?

Love. It was by his own appointment. I went to his house directly after I parted from you. I have been no where else. Matters of account always fatigue me.

Mrs. Love. I would not be too inquisitive, sir.

Love. Oh! no; you never are. I staid at the ban-

ker's the rest of the time, and I came straight from his house to have the pleasure of dining with you.
[Fills a glass of wine.]

Mrs. Love. Were there any sincerity in that declaration, I should be happy. A tavern life has hitherto been your delight. I wonder what delight you can find in such an eternal round of gaming, riot, and dissipation. Will you answer me one question?

Love. With great pleasure,—*[Aside.]*—if it is not inconvenient.

Mrs. Love. Lay your hand on your heart, and tell me,—Have I deserved this usage?

Love. My humble service to you, my love.

[Drinks.]

Mrs. Love. I am sure I have never been deficient in any one point of the duty I owe you. You won my heart, and I gave it freely.

Love. *[Going to sleep.]* It is very true.

Mrs. Love. Your interest has been mine. I have known no pleasure unconnected with your happiness. Diversion, show, and pomp, have had no allurements for me.

Love. *[Dropping asleep.]* Yes,—you are right—just as you please—

Mrs. Love. Had I been inclined to follow the example of other women, your fortune would have felt it before now. You might have been thousands out of pocket; but your interest has been the object of my attention; and your convenience—

Love. *[Turns his chair from her.]* You reason very—
 —you reason admir—ably—
 —admir—ably—
 —always—
 —al—ways—
 —gay—
 —and—
 —enter—
 —enter—
 —taining—
[Going to sleep.]

Mrs. Love. Marriage is generally considered as an introduction to the great scene of the world. I thought it a retreat to less noisy and serener pleasures. What is called polite company *[He falls fast asleep.]* was not my taste. You was lavish in expence; I was, therefore, an œconomist. From the

first moment marriage made me yours, the pleasure arising from your company——There! fast asleep! Agreeable company indeed!——This is ever his way. [*She rises.*] Unfeeling man!—It is too plain that I am grown his aversion. Mr. Lovemore! [*Looking at him.*] you little think what a scene this day has brought to light.——And yet he hopes with falsehood to varnish and disguise his treachery. How mean the subterfuge! shall I rouse him now, and tax him with his guilt? My heart is too full: reproach will only tend to exasperate, and perhaps make him irreconcilable. The pride that can stoop to low and wretched artifice, but ill can brook detection. Let him rest for the present. The widow Bellmour's experiment may answer better.——I will try it, at least.——Oh! Mr. Lovemore, you will break my heart.

[*Looks at him, and exit*

Love. [*Talking in his sleep.*] I do listen—I am not asleep. [*Sleeps and nods.*] You are very right;—always right—I am only thinking a little. No—no—no—[*Mutters indistinctly.*] It was not two o'clock—in bed—in bed by twelve——Sir Bashful is an oaf—The widow Bellmour—[*Sleeps, and his head rolls about.*] What's the matter? [*Waking.*] I beg your pardon; I was beginning to nod. What did you say, my dear? [*Leans on the table without looking about.*] One cannot always, you know—[*Turns about.*] 'Sdeath! she is gone! Oh! fast asleep. This is ever the way when one dines at home. Let me shake it off. [*Rises.*] What's o'clock?—No amusement in this house; what shall I do? The widow?—I must not venture in that quarter. My evil genius, Sir Brilliant, will be busy there. Is any body in the way? I must rally out. My dear Venus, favour your votary this afternoon.

———Your best arm: employ,
All wing'd with pleasure, and all tipt with joy.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Changes to Sir BASHFUL'S. Enter Lady CONSTANT and FURNISH.

Lady Cons. Who brought this letter?

Fur. A servant of Mrs. Lovemore's: he waits an answer.

Lady Cons. My compliments to Mrs. Lovemore, and I shall wait upon her.

Fur. Yes, ma'am.

[*Going.*

Lady Cons. And hark ye, Furnish; have the things been carried to Sir Brilliant, as I ordered?

Fur. I have obeyed your ladyship's commands. The steward went himself. Mr. Pounce, your ladyship knows, is a trusty body. You may depend upon his care.

Lady Cons. Go, and send Mrs. Lovemore her answer. She may depend upon my being with her in time. [*Exit Furnish.*] What can Mrs. Lovemore want? [*Reads.*] '*Ladyship's company to a card-party; but cards are the least part of my object. I have something of higher moment in view, and the presence of my friends is absolutely necessary.*' There is some mystery in all this. What does she mean? I shall go, and then the scene will clear up: those diamond buckles embarrass me more than Mrs. Lovemore's unintelligible letter. Diamond buckles to me! From what quarter? Who could send them? Nobody but Sir Brilliant. I am right in my conclusion: they came from him. Who could take the liberty but a person of his cast? A presuming man! But I have mortified his vanity. Before this time, he has found his diamonds thrown back upon his hands, with the disdain which such confidence deserves.—But if I have made a mistake!—Oh! no; no danger. Has not Sir Brilliant made overtures to me? Has not he declared himself. He sees Sir Bashful's behaviour, and his vanity plumes itself upon that circumstance. To give me my revenge against a crazy and insufferable husband, he would fain induce me to ruin myself

with a coxcomb. Besides, he heard the whole of Sir Bashful's dispute about diamonds and trinkets : the thing is clear ; it was Sir Brilliant sent them ; and by that stratagem he hopes to bribe me into compliance. That bait will never take ; though here comes one, who, I am sure, deserves to be treated without a grain of ceremony.

Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Here she is. Now let me see whether she will take any notice of the present I sent her. She has reason to be in good humour, I think.—Your servant, madam.

Lady Cons. Your address is polite, sir.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] Still proud and obstinate!—Has any thing happened to disturb the harmony of your temper?

Lady Cons. Considering what little discord you make, it is a wonder that my temper is not always in tune.

Sir Bash. If you never gave me cause, madam——

Lady Cons. Oh! for mercy's sake, truce with altercation. I am tired out with the eternal violence of your temper. Those frequent starts of passion hurry me out of my senses : and those unaccountable whims, that hold such constant possession of you——

Sir Bash. Whims, madam?—Not to comply with you in every thing, is a whim, truly. Must I yield to the exorbitant demands of your extravagance? When you laid close siege to me for diamond baubles, and I know not what, was that a whim of mine? Did I take that fancy into my head without cause, and without sufficient foundation?

Lady Cons. Well, we have exhausted the subject. Have not you told me a thousand times that there is no living with me? I agree to it. And have not I returned the compliment? We have nothing new to say ; and now, all that remains, is to let the lawyer reduce to writing our mutual opinions, and so we may part with the pleasure of giving each other a most woeful character.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] The buckles have had no effect. Stubborn! she has received them, and won't own it.

Lady Cons. A dash of your pen, sir, at the foot of certain articles now preparing, will make us both easy. [*Going.*]

Sir Bash. If we don't live happily, it is your own fault.

Lady Cons. That is very odd.

Sir Bash. If you would control your passion for play——

Lady Cons. Quite threadbare!

Sir Bash. I have still a regard for you.

Lady Cons. Worn-out to frippery.—I can't hear any more. The law will dress it up in new language for us, and that will end our differences. [*Exit.*]

Sir Bash. [*Alone.*] I must unburthen my heart: there is no time to be lost. I love her; I admire her; she inflames my tenderest passions, and raises such a conflict here in my very heart, I cannot any longer conceal the secret from her. I'll go and tell her all this moment.—But then that meddling fiend, her maid, will be there: po! I can turn her out of the room; but then the jade will suspect something. Her ladyship may be alone: I'll send to know where she is. Who is there? Sideboard!—

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. Go and tell your lady that—— [*Pauses.*]

Side. Did your honour want me?

Sir Bash. No matter; it does not signify.—[*Aside.*] I shall never be able to tell her my mind: a glance of her eye, and my own confusion, will undo all.

Side. I thought your honour called.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] A thought comes across me; I'll write her a letter. Yes, yes, a letter will do the business. Sideboard, draw that table this way—Reach me a chair.

Side. There, your honour.

Sir Bash. Do you stay while I write a letter. You shall carry it for me. [*Sits down to write.*]

Side. Yes, sir. I hope he has an intrigue upon his hands. A servant thrives under a master that has his private amusements. Love on, say I, if you are so given; it will bring grist to my mill.

Sir Bash. [*Writing.*] This will surprise her. Warm, passionate, and tender; and yet it does not come up to what I feel.

Side. What is he at?—I may as well read the newspaper. [*Takes it out of his pocket.*] What, in the name of wonder, is all this?—Ha, ha! [*Bursts into a loud laugh.*] I never heard the like of this before. Oh, ho, ho, ho!

Sir Bash. What does the scoundrel mean?

[*Stares at him.*

Side. Ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing.

Sir Bash. Does the villain suspect me? [*Rises.*] Hark ye, sirrah, if ever I find that you dare listen at any door in my house—

Side. Sir!

Sir Bash. Confess the truth: have you not been listening to my conversation with Mr. Lovemore this morning?

Side. Who, I, sir? I would not be guilty of such a thing: I never did the like in all my days.

Sir Bash. What was you laughing at?

Side. A foolish thing in the newspaper, sir, that's all. I'll read it to your honour. [*Reads.*] 'We hear that a new comedy is now in rehearsal, and will speedily be performed, intitled, *The Amorous Husband; or, The Man in Love with his own Wife.*

Sir Bash. And what do you see to laugh at?

Side. See, sir! I have lived in a great many families, and never heard of the like before.

Sir Bash. [*Aside.*] There, there, there! I shall be the butt of my own servants.—Sirrah, leave the room; and let me never hear that you have the trick of listening in my house.

Side. No, sir.—The Man in Love with his own Wife!

[*Exit, laughing.*

Sir Bash. What does the varlet mean?—No mat-

ter—I have finished my letter, and it shall be sent this moment.—But then, if I should get into a comedy?—Po! no more scruples. I'll seal it directly.—Sideboard!—

Enter **SIDEBOARD.**

Sir Bash. [*Sealing the letter*] I have opened my heart to her.—What do you bring your hat and stick for?

Side. To go out with your honour's letter.

Sir Bash. You have not far to go. 'Take this, and let nobody see you.

Side. I warrant me, your honour. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. I feel much lighter now. A load is taken off my heart.

Enter **SIDEBOARD.**

Sir Bash. What do you come back for?

Side. A word or two, by way of direction, if you please, sir.

Sir Bash. Blockhead! give it to me.—[*Aside.*] If I direct it, he finds me out.—Go about your business: I have no occasion for you: leave the room.

Side. Very well, sir.—Does he think to manage his own intrigues! If he takes my commission out of my hands, I shall give him warning. 'The vices of our masters are all the vails a poor servant has left. [*Exit.*

Sir Bash. What must be done?—Mr. Lovemore could conduct this business for me. He is a man of address, and knows all the approaches to a woman's heart. That fellow Sideboard coming again?—No, no, this is lucky. Mr. Lovemore, I'm glad to see you.

Enter **LOVEMORE.**

Love. A second visit, you see, in one day, entirely on the score of friendship.

Sir Bash. And I thank you for it; heartily thank you.

Love. I broke away from the company at the St. Alban's on purpose to attend you. Well, I have made your lady easier in her mind, have not I?

Sir Bash. We don't hit it at all, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. No!

Sir Bash. I think she has been rather worse since you spoke to her.

Love. A good symptom that. [Aside.

Sir Bash. She has received the diamond buckles. They were delivered to her maid sealed up, and the man never staid to be asked a question. I saw them in her own hand; but not a syllable escaped her. She was not in the least softened, obstinate as a mule.

Love. The manner of conveying your presents was not well judged. Why did you not make me the bearer?

Sir Bash. I wish I had. She talks of parting; and so, to avoid coming to extremities, I have even thought of telling her the whole truth at once.

Love. How! acquaint her with your passion?

Sir Bash. Ay, and trust to her honour. I could not venture to speak; I should blush, and falter, and look silly; and so I have writ a letter to her. Here it is, signed and sealed, but not directed. I got into a puzzle about that. Servants, you know, are always putting their own construction upon things.

Love. No doubt: and then your secret flies all over the town.

Sir Bash. That's what alarmed me. You shall write the superscription, and send it to her.

Love. No, that won't do. Give her a letter under your hand? I'll speak to her for you: let me try how her pulse beats.

Sir Bash. But a letter may draw an answer from her, and then you know—[Smiling at him.]—I shall have it under her hand.

Love. I don't like this hurry: we had better take time to consider of it.

Sir Bash. No, I can't defer the business of my heart a single moment. It burns like a fever here. Sit down, and write the direction; I'll step and send the servant. He shall carry it, as if it were a letter from yourself.

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Side. Sir Brilliant Fashion is below, sir.

Love. What brings him? He will only interrupt us. Go and talk to him, Sir Bashful; hear what he has to say; amuse him: any thing, rather than let him come up.

Sir Bash. I am gone: he shan't molest you.

[*Exit with* Sideboard.

Love. Fly, make haste; and don't let him know that I am here.—A lucky accident this; I have gained time by it. All matters were in a right train, and he himself levelling the road for me, and now this letter blows me up into the air at once. Some unlucky planet rules to-day. First the Widow Bellmour, a hair-breadth 'scape I had of it; and now almost ruined here! What, in the name of wonder, has he writ to her?—Friendship and wafer, by your leave.—But will that be delicate?—Po! honour has always a great deal to preach upon these occasions; but then the business of my love!—Very true; the passions need but say a word, and their business is done. [*Opens the letter and reads.*] This must never reach her. I'll write a letter from myself. [*Sits down, writes, and starts up.*] I hear him coming: no; all safe. [*Writes.*] This will do:—vastly well.—Her husband's inhumanity! Ay, mention that.—The diamonds may be a present from me: yes, I'll venture it.—There, there; that will do—Long adored—Ay—sweetest revenge—Ay—Eternal admirer—Love-more.—Now, now let me see it.—Admirable! this will do the business. [*Seals the letter.*

Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Well, have you sent it?

Love. Not yet: I am writing the direction.

Sir Bash. And where is that blockhead?—Sideboard!

Enter SIDEBOARD.

Sir Bash. Numskull, why don't you wait?—Mr. Lovemore wants you.

Love. Step and deliver this to your lady; and if she pleases, I will wait upon her.

Sir Bash. Charming!—Take it up stairs directly.

Side. Up stairs, sir? My lady is in the next room.

Sir Bash. Take it to her; make haste; begone. [*Exit Sideboard.*] I hope this will succeed: I shall be for ever obliged to you, and so will her ladyship.

Love. I hope she will, and I shall be proud to serve her.

Sir Bash. You are very good. She won't prove ungrateful, I dare answer for her.—I should like to see how she receives the letter.—The door is conveniently open.—I will have a peep. Ay, there; there she sits.

Love. Where, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. Hush, no noise.—There, do you see her? She has the letter in her hand.—This is a critical moment: I am all over in a tremble.

Love. Silence; not a word. She opens it.—[*Aside.*] Now, my dear Cupid, befriend me now, and your altar shall smoke with incense.

Sir Bash. She colours.

Love. I like that rising blush: a soft and tender token.

Sir Bash. She turns pale.

Love. The natural working of the passions.

Sir Bash. And now she reddens again.—What is she at now?—There she has torn the letter in two;—I am a lost, an undone man. [*Walks away.*]

Love. She has flung it away with indignation: I am undone too. [*Aside, and walks away from the door.*]

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore, you see what it is all come to.

Love. I am sorry to see so haughty a spirit.

Sir Bash. An arrogant, ungrateful woman! to make such a return to so kind a letter!

Love. Ay, so kind a letter!

Sir Bash. Did you ever see such an insolent scorn?

Love. I never was so disappointed in all my life.

Sir Bash. A letter full of the tenderest protestations!

Love. Yes; an unreserved declaration of love!

Sir Bash. Made with the greatest frankness; throwing myself at her very feet.

Love. Did she once smile? was there the faintest gleam of approbation in her countenance?

Sir Bash. She repaid it all with scorn, with pride, contempt, and insolence. I cannot bear this; despised, spurned, and treated like a puppy.

Love. There it stings—like a puppy, indeed!

Sir Bash. Is there a thing in nature so mortifying to the pride of man, as to find oneself rejected and despised by a fine woman, who is conscious of her power, and triumphs in her cruelty?

Love. It is the most damnable circumstance!—

Sir Bash. My dear Mr. Lovemore, I am obliged to you for taking this matter so much to heart.

Love. I take it more to heart than you are aware of.

Sir Bash. This is mortifying; enough to make one ashamed all the rest of one's life.

Love. I did not expect this sullen ill humour.

Sir Bash. Did you ever know so obstinate, so uncomplying a temper?

Enter Sir BRILLIANT.

Sir Bril. Sir Bashful, I forgot to tell you—

Love. He again! he hunts me up and down, as vice did the devil, with a dagger of lath, in the old comedy.

[*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Hey!—what's the matter? You seem both out of humour: what does this mean? Have you quarrelled?

Sir Bash. No, sir; no quarrel:—Why would my booby servant let him in again?

[*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Strike me stupid, but you look very queer upon it!—Lovemore is borrowing money, I suppose: Sir Bashful is driving a hard bargain, and you can't agree about the premium. Sir Bashful, let my friend Lovemore have the money.

Sir Bash. Money!—what does he mean?

Sir Bril. Both out of humour, I see : well, as you will. You have no reason to be in harmony with yourselves; my stars shine with a kinder aspect. Here, here, behold a treasury of love. I came back on purpose to shew it to you. [*Takes a shagreen case out of his pocket.*] See what a present I have received; a magnificent pair of diamond buckles, by all that's amiable.

Love. How?

Sir Bash. [*Walking up to him.*] A pair of diamond buckles?

Sir Bril. How such a present should be sent to me is more than I can explain at present. Perhaps my friend Lovemore gained some intelligence in the quarter where I surprised him to day, on a visit which I little suspected.

Love. That was to serve you: I know nothing of this business.

Sir Bril. The pain in your side, I hope, is better.

Love. Po! this is only to distract your attention, Sir Bashful,

Sir Bash. So I suppose. And was this a present to you?

Sir Bril. A present, sir. The consequence of having some tolerable phrase, a person, and a due degree of attention to the service of the ladies.—Don't you envy me, Sir Bashful?

Sir Bash. I can't but say I do.—[*Turns to Lovemore.*] My buckles, by all that's false in woman!

Love. Take no notice.—[*Walks aside.*] Has he supplanted me here too, as well as with the widow?

Sir Bril. What's the matter with you both?—Burning with envy!

Sir Bash. And I suppose an elegant epistle or a well-penned billet-doux, accompanied this token of the lady's affection.

Sir Bril. That would have been an agreeable addition, but it is still to come. Too many favours at once might overwhelm a body. A country-looking

fellow, as my people tell me, left this, curiously sealed up, at my house: he would not say from whence he came: I should know that in time, was all they could get from him; and I am now panting to learn from whence this mighty success has attended me. Sir Bashful, I came, saw, and conquered. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Sir Bash. But may not this be from some lady, who imagines that you sent it, and therefore chooses to reject your present?

Sir Bril. Oh, no; that cannot be the case. A little knowledge of the world would soon convince you—that ladies do not usually reject presents from the man who has the good fortune to please by his manner, his taste for dress, and a certain *je ne sçai quoi* in his person and conversation.

Sir Bash. So I believe.—[*Walks aside.*] What say you to this, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. She would not have torn a letter from him.

Sir Bril. No, Sir Bashful; a present from me would not have been returned back upon my hands.

Sir Bash. I dare say not.—[*To Lovemore.*] I suppose she will give him my three hundred pounds into the bargain.

Love. After this, I shall wonder at nothing.

Sir Bril. What mortified countenances they both put on? [*Looks at them, and laughs.*]

Sir Bash. [*Walking up to Sir Brilliant.*] And I suppose you expect to have this lady?

Sir Bril. No doubt of it. This is the forerunner, I think. Hey, Lovemore?—Sir Bashful, this it is to be in luck. Ha! ha! [*Laughs at them both.*]

Love. and Sir Bash. [*Both forcing a laugh.*] Ha! ha!

Sir Bril. You both seem strangely picqued.—Lovemore, what makes you so uneasy?

Love. You flatter yourself, and you wrong me—I—I— [*Walks away.*]

Sir Bash. He is a true friend: he is uneasy on my account. [*Aside, and looking at Lovemore;*]

Sir Bril. And, Sir Bashful, something has dashed your spirits. Do you repine at my success?

Sir Bash. I can't but say I do, sir.

Sir Bril. Oh! very well; you are not disposed to be good company. *A l'honneur*, gentlemen; finish your money matters. Lovemore, where do you spend the evening?

Love. A good evening to you, Sir Brilliant: I am engaged. Business with Sir Bashful, you see——

Sir Bril. Well, don't let me be of inconvenience to you. Fare you well, gentlemen. Thou dear pledge of love! [*Looking at the buckles*] thus let me clasp thee to my heart.—Sir Bashful, your servant.

[*Exit.*

Sir Bash. What think you now, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. All unaccountable, sir.

Sir Bash. By all that's false, I am gulled, cheated, and imposed upon. I am deceived, and dubbed a rank cuckold. It is too clear: she has given him the buckles, and I suppose my bank-notes have taken the same course.—Diamond buckles, and three hundred pounds, for Sir Brilliant! A reward for his merit!

Love. He is the favourite, and I have been working for him all this time.

Sir Bash. I now see through all her artifices. My resolution is fixed. If I can but get ocular demonstration of her guilt; if I can but get the means of proving to the whole world that she is vile enough to cuckold me, I shall then be happy.

Love. Why, that will be some consolation!

Sir Bash. So it will: kind Heaven grant me that at least; make it plain that she dishonours me, and I am amply revenged.—Hark! I hear her coming. She shall know all I think, and all I feel. I have done with her for ever.

Love. [*Aside.*] Let me fly the impending storm. If I stay, detection and disgrace pursue me.—Sir Bashful, I am sorry to see matters take this turn. I have done all in my power; and since there is no room to

hope for success, I take my leave, and wish you a good night.

Sir Bash. No, no; you shall not leave me in this distress. You shall hear me tell her her own, and be a witness of our separation. [*Holding him.*

Love. Excuse me: after what has passed, I shall never be able to endure the sight of her. Fare you well; I must be gone; good night, Sir Bashful.

[*Struggling to go.*

Sir Bash. You are my best friend: I cannot part with you. [*Stands between him and the door.*] Stay and hear what she has to say for herself: you will see what a turn she will give to the business.

Love. [*Aside.*] What turn shall I give it?—Confusion! here she comes: I must weather the storm.

Enter Lady CONSTANT.

Lady Cons. After this behaviour, Mr. Lovemore, I am surprised, sir, that you can think of staying a moment longer in this house.

Love. Madam, I——'sdeath! I have no invention to assist me at a pinch. [*Aside.*

Sir Bash. Mr. Lovemore is my friend, madam; and I desire he will stay in my house as long as he pleases.—Hey, Lovemore! [*Looks at him, and smiles.*

Love. [*Aside.*] All must out, I fear.

Lady Cons. Your friend, Sir Bashful!—And do you authorise him to take this unbecoming liberty? Have you given him permission to send me a letter, so extravagant in the very terms of it?

Love. [*Aside.*] Ay, now 'tis coming, and impudence itself has not a word to say.

Sir Bash. I desired him to send that letter, madam.

Love. Sir Bashful desired me, ma'am.

[*Bowing respectfully.*

Sir Bash. I desired him.

Love. All at his request, ma'am.

Lady Cons. And am I to be made your sport?—I wonder, Mr. Lovemore, that you would condescend to make yourself a party in so poor a plot. Do you

presume upon a trifling mark of civility, which you persuaded me to accept of this morning? Do you come disguised under a mask of friendship to help this gentleman in his design against my honour and my happiness?

Love. [*Aside.*] Fairly caught, and nothing can bring me off.

Sir Bash. A mask of friendship!—He is a true friend, madam: he sees how ill I am treated; and let me tell you, there is not a word of truth in that letter.

Love. Not a syllable of truth, ma'am.—[*Aside.*] This will do; his own nonsense will save me.

Sir Bash. It was all done to try you, madam.

Love. Nothing more, ma'am; merely to try you.

Sir Bash. By way of experiment only: just to see how you would behave upon it.

Love. Nothing else was intended: all to try you, ma'am.

Lady Cons. You have been both notably employed. The exploit is worthy of you. Your snare is spread for a woman; and if you had succeeded, the fame of so bright an action would add mightily to two such illustrious characters.

Sir Bash. A snare spread for her! Mark that, Mr. Lovemore; she calls it ensnaring.

Love. Ensnared to her own good [*To Sir Bashful.*] —He has pleaded admirably for me. [*Aside.*

Lady Cons. As to you, Sir Bashful, I have long ago ceased to wonder at your conduct; you have lost the power of surprising me; but when Mr. Lovemore becomes an accomplice in so mean a plot—

Sir Bash. I am in no plot, madam, and nobody wants to ensnare you; do we, Lovemore?

Love. Sir Bashful knows that no harm was intended.

Sir Bash. Yes, I am in the secret, and my friend Lovemore meant no harm.

Love. If the letter had succeeded, Sir Bashful knows there would have been no ill consequence.

Sir Bash. No harm in nature; but I now see how

things are; and since your ladyship will listen to nothing for your own good, it is too plain, from all that has passed between us, that our tempers are by no means fitted for each other, and I am ready to part whenever you please; nay, I will part.

Lady Cons. And that is the only point in which we can agree, sir.

Sir Bash. Had the letter been sent from another quarter, it would have met with a better reception: we know where your smiles are bestowed.

Lady Cons. Deal in calumny, sir; give free scope to malice; I disdain your insinuations.

Sir Bash. The fact is too clear, and reproaches are now too late. This is the last of our conversing together; and you may take this by the way, you are not to believe one syllable of that letter.

Love. There is not a syllable of it deserves the least credit, ma'am.

Sir Bash. It was all a mere joke, madam: was not it, Lovemore?—And as to your being a fine woman, and as to any passion that any body has conceived for you, there was no such thing: you can witness for me, Lovemore; can't you?

Lady Cons. Oh! you are witnesses for one another.

Love. Sir Bashful knows the fairness of my intentions, and I know his.—[*Aside.*] He has acquitted me better than I expected, thanks to his absurdity.

Lady Cons. Go on, and aggravate your ill usage, gentlemen.

Sir Bash. It was all a bam, madam, a scene we thought proper to act.—Let us laugh at her.

[*Goes up to Lovemore.*]

Love. With all my heart.—[*Aside.*] A silly block-head! I can't help laughing at him.

[*Laughing heartily.*]

Sir Bash. [*Laughing with him.*] Ha! ha! ha!—all a bam; nothing else; a contrivance to make sport for ourselves—hey, Lovemore?

Lady Cons. This usage is insupportable. I shall not stay for an explanation. Two such worthy con-

federates!—Is my chair ready there? You may depend, sir, that this is the last time you will see me in this house. [Exit.

Sir Bash. Agreed; a bargain, with all my heart. Lovemore, I have managed this well.

Love. Charmingly managed! I did not think you had so much spirit.

Sir Bash. I have found her out. The intrigue is too plain. She and Sir Brilliant are both detected.

Love. I never suspected that Sir Brilliant was the happy man. I wish I had succeeded, had it been only to mortify his vanity.

Sir Bash. And so do I: I wish it too. But never own the letter; deny it to the last.

Love. You may depend upon my secrecy.

Sir Bash. I am for ever obliged to you. A foolish woman! how she stands in her own light!

Love. Truly, I think she does. But since I have no interest with her ladyship, I shall now sound a retreat, and leave matters to your own discretion. Success attend you. [Going.

Sir Bash. You must not forsake me in this distress.

Love. Had your lady proved tractable, I should not have cared how long I had staid. But since things are come to this pass, I shall now go and see what kind of reception I am to meet with from Mrs. Lovemore.

Sir Bash. Don't let her know that you have a regard for her.

Love. Oh, no; I see the consequence,—[Aside.] Well off this time; and, Madam Fortune, if I trust you again, you shall play me what prank you please. Sir Bashful, yours. [Going.

Sir Bash. A thousand thanks to you. And, hark ye, if I can serve you with your lady—

Love. I am much obliged to you: but I shall endeavour to go on, without giving you the trouble of assisting me. And, do you hear? assure my Lady Constant, that I meant nothing but to serve your interest. [Exit.

Sir Bash. Rely upon my management. I can ac-

quit you.—My Lady Constant! Lady Constant—Let me chase her from my thoughts: can I do it? Rage, fury, love—no more of love! I am glad she tore the letter. Odso! yonder it lies. It is only torn in two, and she may still piece the fragments together. I'll pick up the letter this moment: it shall never appear in evidence against me. As to Sir Brilliant, his motions shall be watched; I know how to proceed with madam, and if I can but prove the fact, every body will say that I am ill used by her. [Exit.

ACT V. SCENE I.

An Apartment at Mr. LOVEMORE'S. Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE, elegantly dressed; MUSLIN following her.

Muslin. WHY, to be sure, ma'am, it is so for certain. and you are very much in the right of it.

Mrs. Love. I fancy I am: I see the folly of my former conduct. I am determin'd never to let my spirits sink into a melancholy state again.

Mus. Why, that's the very thing, ma'am; the very thing I have been always preaching up to you. Did not I always say, see company, ma'am, take your pleasure, and never break your heart for any man? This is what I always said.

Mrs. Love. And you have said enough: spare yourself the trouble now.

Mus. I always said so. And what did the world say? Heavens bless her for a sweet woman! and a plague go with him for an inhuman, barbarous, bloody—murdering brute.

Mrs. Love. Well, truce with your impertinence; your tongue runs on at such a rate.

Mus. Nay, don't be angry: they did say so indeed. But, dear heart, how every body will be overjoy'd when they find you have pluck'd up a little! As for me, it gives me new life, to have so much company in the house, and such a racketting at the door with

coaches and chairs, enough to hurry a body out of one's wits. Lard, this is another thing, and you look quite like another thing, ma'am, and that dress quite becomes you. I suppose, ma'am, you will never wear your negligee again. It is not fit for you indeed, ma'am. It might pass very well with some folks, ma'am, but the like of you——

Mrs. Love. Will you never have done? Go and see who is coming up stairs.

Enter Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Mrs. Love. Mrs. Bellmour, I revive at the sight of you. Muslin, do you step, and do as I ordered you.

Mrs. What the deuce can she be at now! [*Exit.*

Mrs. Bell. You see I am punctual to my time.—Well, I admire your dress of all things. It's mighty pretty.

Mrs. Love. I am glad you like it. But under all this appearance of gaiety, I have at the bottom but an aching heart.

Mrs. Bell. Be ruled by me, and I'll answer for the event. Why really, now you look just as you should do.—Why neglect so fine a figure?

Mrs. Love. You are so obliging!

Mrs. Bell. And so true.—What was beautiful before, is now heightened by the additional ornaments of dress; and if you will but animate and inspire the whole with those graces of the mind which I am sure you possess, the impression cannot fail of being effectual upon all beholders; even upon the depraved mind of Mr. Lovemore.—You have not seen him since, have you?

Mrs. Love. He dined at home, but was soon upon the wing to his usual haunts.

Mrs. Bell. If he does but come home time enough, depend upon it, my plot will take. And have you got together a good deal of company?

Mrs. Love. Yes, a tolerable party.

Mrs. Bell. That's right: shew him that you will consult your own pleasure.

Mrs. Love. Apropos, as soon as I came home I received a letter from Sir Brilliant, in a style of warmth and tenderness that would astonish you. He begs to see me again, and has something particular to communicate. I left it in my dressing room; you shall see it by-and-by: I took your advice, and sent him word he might come. The lure brought him hither immediately: he makes no doubt of his success with me.

Mrs. Bell. Well! two such friends as Sir Brilliant and Mr. Lovemore, I believe, never existed.

Mrs. Love. Their falsehood to each other is unparalleled, I left Sir Brilliant at the card-table: as soon as he can disengage himself, he will quit his company in pursuit of me. I forgot to tell you, my Lady Constant is here.

Mrs. Bell. Is she?

Mrs. Love. She is, and has been making the strangest discovery: Mr. Lovemore has had a design there too!

Mrs. Bell. Oh! I don't doubt him: but the more proof we have the better.

Mrs. Love. There is sufficient proof: you must know, ma'am—[*A rap at the door.*] As I live and breathe, I believe this is Mr. Lovemore.

Mrs. Bell. If it is, every thing goes on as I could wish.

Mrs. Love. I hear his voice, it is he. How my heart beats!

Mrs. Bell. Courage, and the day's our own. He must not see me yet. Where shall I run?

Mrs. Love. In there, ma'am. Make haste; I hear his step on the stairs.

Mrs. Bell. Success attend you. I am gone.

[*Exit.*]

Mrs. Love. I am frightened out of my senses. What the event may be I fear to think; but I must go through with it.

Enter LOVEMORE.

Mrs. Love. You are welcome home, sir.

Love. Mrs. Lovemore, your servant. [*Without looking at her.*]

Mrs. Love. It is somewhat rare to see you at home so early.

Love. I said I should come home, did not I? I always like to be as good as my word.—What could the widow mean by this usage? to make an appointment, and break it thus abruptly.

Mrs. Love. He seems to muse upon it. [*Aside.*]

Love. [*Aside.*] She does not mean to do so treacherous a thing as to jilt me? Oh, Lord! I am wonderfully tired. [*Yawns, and sinks into an armed chair.*]

Mrs. Love. Are you indisposed, my dear?

Love. No, my love; I thank you, I am very well;—a little fatigued only, with jolting over the stones, all the way into the city this morning. I have paid a few visits this afternoon.—Confoundedly tired.—Where's William?

Mrs. Love. Do you want any thing?

Love. Only my cap and slippers. I am not in spirits, I think. [*Yawns.*]

Mrs. Love. You are never in spirits at home, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. I beg your pardon: I never am any where more cheerful. [*Stretching his arms.*] I wish I may die if I an't very very happy at home,—very [*Yawns.*] very happy.

Mrs. Love. I can hear otherwise. I am informed that Mr. Lovemore is the promoter of mirth and good humour wherever he goes.

Love. Oh! no, you over-rate me; upon my soul you do.

Mrs. Love. I can hear, sir, that no person's company is so acceptable to the ladies; that your wit inspires every thing: you have your compliment for one, your smile for another, a whisper for a third, and so on, sir: you divide your favours, and are every where, but at home, all whim, vivacity, and spirit.

Love. Ho! ho! [*Laughing.*] how can you talk so?

I swear I can't help laughing at the fancy. All whim, vivacity, and spirit! I shall burst my sides. How can you banter one so?—I divide my favours too!—Oh, heavens! I can't stand this raillery! such a description of me!—I that am rather saturnine, of a serious cast, and inclined to be pensive: I can't help laughing at the oddity of the conceit.—Oh Lord! Oh Lord! [Laughs.]

Mrs. Love. Just as you please, sir. I see that I am ever to be treated with indifference.

[Walks across the stage.]

Love. *[Rises and walks a contrary way.]* I can't put this widow Bellmour out of my head. [Aside.]

Mrs. Love. If I had done any thing to provoke this usage,—this cold determined contempt— [Walking.]

Love. I wish I had done with that business entirely; but my desires are kindled, and must be satisfied. [Aside.]

[They walk for some time silently by each other.]

Mrs. Love. What part of my conduct gives you offence, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. Still harping upon that ungrateful string!—but pr'ythee don't set me a laughing again.—Offence!—nothing gives me offence, child!—you know I am very fond— *[Yawns and walks.]*—I like you of all things, and think you a most admirable wife;—prudent, managing,—careless of your own person, and very attentive to mine;—not much addicted to pleasure,—grave, retired, and domestic; you govern your house, pay the tradesmen's bills, *[Yawns.]* scold the servants, and love your husband:—upon my soul, a very good wife!—as good a sort of a wife *[Yawns.]* as a body might wish to have.—Where's William? I must go to bed,

Mrs. Love. To bed so early! Had not you better join the company?

Love. I shan't go out to night.

Mrs. Love. But I mean the company in the dining-room.

Love. Company in the dining room! *[Starts at her,*

Mrs. Love. Yes : I invited them to a rout.

Love. A rout in my house!—and you dressed out too!—What is all this?

Mrs. Love. You have no objection, I hope.

Love. Objection!—No, I like company, you know, of all things; I'll go and join them; who are they all?

Mrs. Love. You know 'em all; and there's your friend, Sir Brilliant.

Love. Is he there? I shall be glad to see him. But, pray, how comes all this about?

Mrs. Love. I intend to see company often.

Love. Do you?

Mrs. Love. Ay, and not look tamely on, while you revel luxuriously in a course of pleasure. I shall pursue my own plan of diversion.

Love. Do so, ma'am: the change in your temper will not be disagreeable.

Mrs. Love. And so I shall, sir, I assure you. Adieu to melancholy, and welcome pleasure, wit, and gaiety. [*Ske walks about and sings.*]

Love. What the devil has come over her? And what in the name of wonder does all this mean?

Mrs. Love. Mean, sir!—It means, it means—how can you ask me what it means?—Well, to be sure, the sobriety of that question!—Do you think a woman of spirit can have leisure to tell her meaning, when she is all air, alertness, rapture, and enjoyment?

Love. She is mad!—Stark mad!

Mrs. Love. You're mistaken, sir,—not mad, but in spirits, that's all. Am I too flighty for you?—Perhaps I am: you are of a saturnine disposition, inclined to think a little or so. Well, don't let me interrupt you; don't let me be of any inconvenience: that would be the unpolitest thing; a married couple to be interrfering and encroaching on each other's pleasures. Oh, hideous! it would be Gothic to the last degree. Ha, ha, ha!

Love. [*Forcing a laugh.*] Ha, ha!—Ma'am, you—ha, ha! you are perfectly right.

Mrs. Love. Nay, but I don't like that laugh now :

I positively don't like it. Can't you laugh out as you were used to do? For my part, I'm determined to do nothing else all the rest of my life.

Love. This is the most astonishing thing! Ma'am, I don't rightly comprehend——

Mrs. Love. Oh, Lud! Oh Lud!—with that important face! Well, but come! what don't you comprehend?

Love. There is something in this treatment that I don't so well——

Mrs. Love. Oh! are you there, sir? How quickly they, who have no sensibility for the peace and happiness of others can feel for themselves, Mr. Lovemore!—But that's a grave reflection, and I hate reflection.

Love. What has she got into her head? This sudden change, Mrs. Lovemore, let me tell you——

Mrs. Love. Nay don't be frightened: there is no harm in innocent mirth, I hope: never look so grave upon it. I assure you, sir, that though, on your part, you seem determined to offer constant indignities to your wife, and though the laws of retaliation would in some sort exculpate her, if when provoked to the utmost, exasperated beyond all enduring, she should, in her turn, make him know what it is to receive an injury in the tenderest point——

Love. Madam!

[*Angrily.*

Mrs. Love. Well, well, don't be alarmed. I shan't retaliate: my own honour will secure you there; you may depend upon it.—Will you come and play a game at cards? Well, do as you like; you won't come? No, no, I see you won't—What say you to a bit of supper with us?—Nor that neither?—Follow your inclinations: it is not material what a body eats, you know; the company expects me; adieu, Mr. Lovemore, yours, yours. [Exit singing.]

Love. This is a frolic I never saw her in before!—Laugh all the rest of my life!—laws of retaliation!—an injury in the tenderest point!—the company expects me,—adieu! yours, yours!—[*Mimicking her.*]

What the devil is all this? Some of her female friends have been tampering with her. So, so: I must begin to look a little sharp after madam. I'll go this moment into the card-room, and watch whom she whispers with, whom she ogles with, and every circumstance that can lead to—— [Going.]

Enter MUSLIN, in a hurry.

Mus. Madam, madam,—here's your letter; I would not for all the world that my master——

Love. What, is she mad too? What's the matter, woman?

Mus. Nothing, sir,—nothing: I wanted a word with my lady, that's all, sir.

Love. You would not for the world that your master—What was you going to say?—what paper's that?

Mus. Paper, sir!

Love. Paper, sir! Let me see it.

Mus. Lord, sir! how can you ask a body for such a thing? It's a letter to me, sir, a letter from the country; a letter from my sister, sir. She bids me to buy her a *shiver de frize* cap, and a sixteenth in the lottery; and tells me of a number she dreamt of, that's all, sir: I'll put it up.

Love. Let me look at it. Give it me this moment. [Reads.] To Mrs. Lovemore!—Brilliant Fashion. This is a letter from the country, is it?

Mus. That, sir—that is—no, sir,—no;—that's not sister's letter.—If you will give me that back, sir, I'll shew you the right one.

Love. Where did you get this?

Mus. Sir!

Love. Where did you get it? Tell me truth.

Mus. Dear heart, you fright a body so—in the parlour, sir—I found it there.

Love. Very well!—leave the room.

Mus. The devil fetch it, I was never so out in my politics in all my days. [Exit.]

Love. A pretty epistle truly! [Reads.] 'When you command me, my dearest Mrs. Lovemore, never to

touch again upon the subject of love, you command an impossibility. You excite the flame, and forbid it to burn. Permit me once more to throw myself on my knees, and implore your compassion.'—Compassion, with a vengeance on him!—'Think you see me now with tender, melting, supplicating eyes, languishing at your feet.'—Very well, sir.—'Can you find it in your heart to persist in cruelty?—Grant me but access to you once more, and, in addition to what I already said this morning, I will urge such motives'—Urge motives, will ye?—'as will convince you, that you should no longer hesitate in gratitude to reward him, who here makes a vow of eternal constancy and love.

BRILLIANT FASHION.'

So! so! so! your very humble servant, Sir Brilliant Fashion!—This is your friendship for me, is it?—You are mighty kind indeed, sir,—but I thank you as much as if you had really done me the favour: and, Mrs. Lovemore, I'm your humble servant too. She intends to laugh all the rest of her life! This letter will change her note. Yonder she comes along the gallery, and Sir Brilliant in full chase of her. They come this way. Could I but detect them both now! I'll step aside, and who knows but the devil may tempt them to their undoing. A polite husband I am: there's the coast clear for you, madam.

[*Exit.*]

Enter Mrs. LOVEMORE and Sir BRILLIANT.

Mrs. Love. I have already told you my mind, Sir Brilliant. Your civility is odious; your compliments fulsome; and your solicitations insulting.—I must make use of harsh language, sir; you provoke it.

Sir Bril. Not retiring to solitude and discontent again, I hope, madam! Have a care, my dear Mrs. Lovemore, of a relapse.

Mrs. Love. No danger, sir: don't be too solicitous about me. Why leave the company! Let me entreat you to return, sir.

Sir Bril. By Heaven, there is more rapture in being one moment *vis-à-vis* with you, than in the company of a whole drawing-room of beauties. Round you are melting pleasures, tender transports, youthful loves, and blooming graces, all unfelt, neglected, and despised, by a tasteless, cold, unimpassioned husband, while they might be all so much better employed to the purposes of ecstasy and bliss.

Mrs. Love. I am amazed, sir, at this liberty.—What action of my life has authorized this assurance?—I desire, sir, you will desist. Were I not afraid of the ill consequences that might follow, I should not hesitate a moment to acquaint Mr. Lovemore with your whole behaviour.

Sir Bril. She won't tell her husband!—A charming creature, and blessings on her for so convenient a hint. She yields, by all my hope!—What shall I say to overwhelm her senses in a flood of nonsense!

[*Aside.*

Go my heart's envoys, tender sighs make haste—

Still drink delicious poisons from thy eye,—

Raptures and paradise

Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be pressed.

[*Forcing her all this time.*

Enter Mr. LOVEMORE.

Love. Hell and distraction! this is too much.

Sir Bril. What the devil's the matter now? [*Kneels down to buckle his shoe.*] This confounded buckle is always plaguing me. Lovemore! I rejoice to see thee.

[*Looking at each other.*

Love. And have you the confidence to look me in the face?

Sir Bril. I was telling your lady, here, of the most whimsical adventure—

Love. Don't add the meanness of falsehood to the black attempt of invading the happiness of your friend. I did imagine, sir, from the long intercourse that has subsisted between us, that you might have had deli-

cacy enough, feeling enough, honour enough, sir, not to meditate an injury like this.

Sir Bril. Ay, it's all over, I am detected. [*Aside.*] Mr. Lovemore, I feel that I have been wrong, and will not attempt a vindication of myself. We have been friends hitherto, and if begging your pardon for this rashness will any ways atone——

Love. No, sir, nothing can atone. The provocation you have given me would justify my drawing upon you this instant, did not that lady, and this roof protect you.

Sir Bril. Harsh language to a friend——

Love. Friend, Sir Brilliant!

Sir Bril. If you will but hear me——

Love. Sir, I insist; I won't hear a word.

Sir Bril. I declare upon my honour——

Love. Honour! for shame, Sir Brilliant: honour and friendship are sacred words, and you profane them both.

Sir Bril. If imploring forgiveness of that lady——

Love. That lady!—I desire you will never speak to that lady,

Sir Bril. Can you command a moment's patience?

Love. Sir, I am out of all patience: this must be settled between us: I have done for the present.

Enter Sir BASHFUL.

Sir Bash. Did not I hear loud words among you! I certainly did. What are you quarrelling about?

Love. Read that, Sir Bashful. [*Gives him Sir Brilliant's letter.*] Read that, and judge if I have not cause——

[*Sir Bashful reads to himself,*

Sir Bril. Hear but what I have to say——

Love. No, sir, no; we shall find a fitter time. As for you, madam, I am satisfied with your conduct. I was indeed a little alarmed, but I have been a witness of your behaviour, and I am above harbouring low suspicions.

Sir Bash. Upon my word Mr. Lovemore, this is carrying the jest too far.

Love. It is the basest action a gentleman can be guilty of; and to a person who never injured him, still more criminal.

Sir Bash. Why so I think. Sir Brilliant, [*To him aside.*] here take this letter, and read it to him, his own letter to my wife.

Sir Bril. Let me see it— [*Takes the letter.*]

Sir Bash. 'Tis indeed, as you say, the vilest action a gentleman can be guilty of.

Love. An unparalleled breach of friendship.

Sir Bril. Not altogether so unparalleled: I believe it will not be found without a precedent—as for example— [*Reads.*]

‘ *To My Lady CONSTANT—*

‘ *Why should I conceal, my dear madam, that your charms have awaken’d my tenderest passion?*’

Love. Confusion!—my letter— [*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. [*Reading.*] ‘ *I long have loved you, long adored. Could I but flutter myself—*
[*Lovemore walks about uneasy; Sir Brilliant follows him.*]

Sir Bash. There, Mr. Lovemore, the basest treachery!

Sir Bril. [*Reads.*] ‘ *Could I but flatter myself with the least kind return.*’

Love. Confusion! let me seize the letter out of his hand. [*Snatches it from him.*]

Sir Bash. An unparalleled breach of friendship, Mr. Lovemore.

Love. All a forgery, sir; all a forgery.

Sir Bash. That I deny: it is the very identical letter my lady threw away with such indignation. She tore it in two, and I have pieced it together.

Love. A mere contrivance to varnish his guilt.

Sir Bril. Ha! ha! my dear Lovemore, we know one another. Have not you been at the same work with the widow Bellmour?

Love. The widow Bellinour!—If I spoke to her, it was to serve you, sir.

Sir Bril. Are you sure of that?

Love. Po! I won't stay a moment longer among ye. I'll go into another room to avoid ye all. I know little or nothing of the widow Bellmour, sir.

[*Opens the door.*]

Enter Mrs. BELLMOUR.

Hell and destruction!—what fiend is conjured up here? Zoons! let me make my escape out of the house. [*Runs to the opposite door.*]

Mrs. Love. I'll secure this pass: you must not go, my dear.

Love. 'Sdeath, madam, give me way.

Mrs. Love. Nay, don't be in such a hurry. I want to introduce an acquaintance of mine to you.

Love. I desire, madam—

Mrs. Bell. My Lord, my Lord Etheridge: I am heartily glad to see your lordship. [*Taking hold of him.*]

Mrs. Love. Do, my dear, let me introduce this lady to you. [*Turning him to her.*]

Love. Here's the devil and all to do! [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Bell. My lord, this is the most fortunate encounter.

Love. I wish I was fifty miles off. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Love. Mrs Bellmour, give me leave to introduce Mr. Lovemore to you. [*Turning him to her.*]

Mrs. Bell. No, my dear ma'am, let me introduce Lord Etheridge to you. [*Pulling him.*] My Lord—

Sir Bril. In the name of wonder, what is all this?

Sir Bash. This is another of his intrigues blown up.

Mrs. Love. My dear ma'am, you are mistaken: this is my husband.

Mrs. Bell. Pardon me, ma'am, 'tis my Lord Etheridge.

Mrs. Love. My dear, how can you be so ill-bred in your own house?—Mrs. Bellmour, this is Mr. Lovemore.

Love. Are you going to toss me in a blanket, madam?—call up the rest of your people, if you are.

Mrs. Bell. P-haw! pry'thee now, my lord, leave off your humours. Mrs. Lovemore, this is my Lord

Etheridge, a lover of mine, who has made proposals of marriage to me.

Love. Confusion! let me get rid of these two furies. [*Breaks away from them.*]

Sir Bash. He has been tampering with her too, has he?

Mrs. Bell. [*Follows him.*] My lord, I say, my Lord Etheridge, won't your lordship know me?

Love. This is the most damnable accident! [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Bell. I hope your lordship has not forgot your appointment at my house this evening.

Love. I deserve all this. [*Aside.*]

Mrs. Bell. Pray, my lord, what have I done, that you treat me with this coldness? Come, come, you shall have a wife: I will take compassion on you.

Love. Damnation! I can't stand it. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. Murder will out: murder will out.

Mrs. Bell. Come, cheer up, my lord: what the deuce, your dress is alter'd! what's become of the star and ribband? And so the gay, the florid, the *magnifique* Lord Etheridge dwindles down into plain Mr. Lovemore, the married man! Mr. Lovemore, your most obedient, very humble servant, sir.

Love. I can't bear to feel myself in so ridiculous a circumstance. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bash. He has been passing himself for a lord, has he?

Mrs. Bell. I beg my compliments to your friend Mrs. Loveit: I am much obliged to you both for your very honourable designs. [*Curtsying to him.*]

Love. I was never so ashamed in all my life!

Sir Bril. So, so, so, all his pains were to hide the star from me. This discovery is a perfect cordial to my dejected spirits.

Mrs. Bell. Mrs. Lovemore, I cannot sufficiently acknowledge the providence that directed you to pay me a visit, though I was wholly unknown to you; and I shall henceforth consider you as my deliverer.

Love. So, it was she that fainted away in the closet, and be damn'd to her jealousy. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. By all that's whimsical, an odd sort of an adventure this! My lord, [*Advances to him.*] my lord, my Lord Etheridge, as the man says in the play, 'Your lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.'

Love. Now he comes upon me.—Oh, I'm in a fine situation. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. My lord, I hope that ugly pain in your lordship's side is abated.

Love. Absurd and ridiculous. [*Aside.*]

Sir Bril. There is nothing forming there, I hope, my lord.

Love. I shall come to an explanation with you.

Sir Bril. The tennis-ball from Lord Racket's unlucky left hand.

Love. No more at present, Sir Brilliant. I leave you now to yourselves, and—[*Goes to the door in the back scene.*]—'sdeath, another fiend! I am beset by them.

Enter Lady CONSTANT.

No way to escape?—[*Attempts both stage-doors, and is prevented.*]

Lady Cons. Mr. Lovemore, it is the luckiest thing in the world that you are come home.

Love. Ay, it is all over—all must come to light.

Lady Cons. I have lost every rubber; quite broke; four by honours against me every time. Do, Mr. Lovemore, lend me another hundred.

Love. I would give an hundred pounds you were all in Lapland. [*Aside.*]

Lady Cons. Mrs. Lovemore, let me tell you, you are married to the falsest man; he has deceived me strangely.

Mrs. Love. I begin to feel for him, and to pity his uneasiness.

Mrs. Bell. Never talk of pity; let him be probed to the quick.

Sir Bash. The case is pretty plain, I think, now, Sir Brilliant.

Sir Bril. Pretty plain, upon my soul! Ha! ha!

Love. I'll turn the tables upon Sir Bashful, for all

this—[*Takes Sir Bashful's letter out of his pocket.*]
—where is the mighty harm now in this letter?

Sir Bash. Where's the harm?

Love. [*Reads.*] “*I cannot, my dearest life, any longer behold—*

Sir Bash. Shame and confusion! I am undone.

[*Aside.*
Love. Hear this, Sir Bashful—“*The manifold vexations, of which, through a false prejudice, I am myself the occasion.*”

Lady Cons. What is all this?

Sir Bash. I am a lost man. [*Aside.*

Love. Mind, Sir Bashful.—“*I am therefore resolved, after many conflicts with myself, to throw off the mask, and frankly own a passion, which the fear of falling into ridicule has, in appearance, suppressed.*”

Sir Bash. 'Sdeath! I'll hear no more of it.

[*Snatches at the letter.*
Love. No, sir; I resign it here, where it was directed; and with it, these notes which Sir Bashful gave me for your use.

Lady Cons. It is his hand, sure enough.

Love. Yes madam, and those are his sentiments, which he explained to me more at large.

Lady Cons. [*Reads.*] “*Accept the presents which I myself have sent you; money, attendance, equipage, and every thing else you shall command; and, in return, I shall only entreat you to conceal from the world that you have raised a flame in this heart, which will ever shew me,*

Your admirer

And your truly affectionate husband,

BASHFUL CONSTANT.”

All. Ha! ha!

Sir Bril. So, so, so! he has been in love with his wife all this time, has he? Sir Bashful, will you go and see the new comedy with me?

Sir Bash. I shall blush through the world all the rest of my life. [*Aside.*

Sir Bril. Lovemore, don't you think it a base thing

to invade the happiness of a friend? or to do him a clandestine wrong? or to injure him with the woman he loves?

Love. To cut the matter short with you, sir, we have been traitors to each other; a couple of unprincipled, unreflecting profligates.

Sir Bril. Profligates.

Love. Ay, both; we are pretty fellows indeed!

Mrs. Bell. I am glad to find you are awakened to a sense of your error.

Love. I am, madam, and am frank enough to own it. I am above attempting to disguise my feelings, when I am conscious they are on the side of truth and honour. With the sincerest remorse I ask your pardon.—I should ask pardon of my Lady Constant too, but the fact is, Sir Bashful threw the whole affair in my way; and, when a husband will be ashamed of loving a valuable woman, he must not be surprised, if other people take her case into consideration, and love her for him.

Sir Bril. Why, faith, that does in some sort make his apology.

Sir Bash. Sir Bashful! Sir Bashful, thou art ruined.

[*Aside.*

Mrs. Bell. Well, sir, upon certain terms, I don't know but I may sign and seal your pardon.

Love. Terms!—what terms?

Mrs. Bell. That you make due expiation of your guilt to that lady. [*Pointing to Mrs. Lovemore.*

Love. That lady, ma'am!—That lady has no reason to complain.

Mrs. Love. No reason to complain, Mr. Lovemore?

Love. No, madam, none; for whatever may have been my imprudences, they have had their source in your conduct.

Mrs. Love. In my conduct, sir?

Love. In your conduct.—I here declare before this company, and I am above misrepresenting the matter; I here declare, that no man in England could be better inclined to domestic happiness, if you, madam,

on your part, had been willing to make home agreeable.

Mrs. Love. There, I confess, he touches me.

[*Aside.*

Love. You could take pains enough before marriage; you could put forth all your charms; practise all your arts, and make your features please by rule; for ever changing, running an eternal round of variety; and all this to win my affections: but when you had won them, you did not think them worth your keeping; never dressed, pensive, silent, melancholy; and the only entertainment in my house was the dear pleasure of a dull conjugal tête-à-tête; and all this insipidity, because you think the sole merit of a wife consists in her virtue: a fine way of amusing a husband, truly!

Sir Bril. Upon my soul, and so it is— [*Laughing.*

Mrs. Love. Sir, I must own there is too much truth in what you say. This lady has opened my eyes, and convinced me there was a mistake in my former conduct.

Love. Come, come, you need say no more. I forgive you; I forgive.

Mrs. Love. Forgive! I like that air of confidence, when you know that, on my side, it is, at worst, an error in judgment; whereas, on yours——

Mrs. Bell. Po! po! never stand disputing: you know each other's faults and virtues: you have nothing to do but mend the former, and enjoy the latter. There, there, kiss and friends. There, *Mrs. Lovemore*, take your reclaimed libertine to your arms.

Love. 'Tis in your power, madam, to make a reclaimed libertine of me indeed.

Mrs. Love. From this moment it shall be our mutual study to please each other.

Love. A match with all my heart. I shall hereafter be ashamed only of my follies, but never be ashamed of owning that I sincerely love you.

Sir Bash. Shan't you be ashamed?

Love. Never, sir.

Sir Bash. And will you keep me in countenance?

Love. I will.

Sir Bash. Give me your hand. I now forgive you all. My Lady Constant, I own the letter, I own the sentiments of it; [*Embraces her.*] and from this moment I take you to my heart.—Lovemore, zookers! you have made a man of me. Sir Brilliant, come; produce the buckles.

Lady Cons. If you hold in this humour, Sir Bashful, our quarrels are at an end.

Sir Bril. And now, I suppose, I must make restitution here— [*Gives Lady Constant the buckles.*]

Sir Bash. Ay, ay, make restitution. Lovemore! this is the consequence of his having some tolerable phrase, and a person, Mr. Lovemore! ha! ha!—

Sir Bril. Why, I own the laugh is against me. With all my heart; I am glad to see my friends happy at last. Lovemore, may I presume to hope for pardon at that lady's hands? [*Points to Mrs. Lovemore.*]

Love. My dear confederate in vice, your pardon is granted. Two sad libertines we have been. But come, give us your hand: we have used each other scurvily; for the future we will endeavour to atone for the errors of our past misconduct.

Sir Bril. Agreed; we will henceforward behave like men, who have not forgot the obligations of truth and honour.

Love. And now I congratulate the whole company, that this business has had so happy a tendency to convince each of us of our folly.

Mrs Bell. Pray, sir, don't draw me into a share of your folly.

Love. Come, come, my dear ma'am, you are not without your share of it. This will teach you, for the future, to be content with one lover at a time, without listening to a fellow you know nothing of, because he assumes a title, and spreads a fair report of himself.

Mrs. Bell. The reproof is just, I grant it.

Love. Come, let us join the company cheerfully, keep our own secrets, and not make ourselves th town-talk.

Sir Bash. Ay, ay; let us keep the secret.

Love. What returning to your fears again! you will put me out of countenance, Sir Bashful.

Sir Bash. I have done.

Love. When your conduct is fair and upright, never be afraid of ridicule. Real honour and generous affection may bid defiance to all the small wits in the kingdom. In my opinion, were the business of this day to go abroad into the world, it might prove a very useful lesson: the men would see how their passions may carry them into the danger of wounding the bosom of a friend; and the ladies would learn, that, after the marriage rites are performed, they ought not to suffer their powers of pleasing to languish away, but should still remember to sacrifice to the Graces.

To win a man, when all your pains succeed,

The WAY TO KEEP HIM is a task indeed.

[Exeunt omnes.



SONG FOR MRS. CIBBER.

IN THE WAY TO KEEP HIM.

Written at the Revival of the Play, by Mr. GARRICK.

*YE fair married dames, who so often deplore,
That a lover once blest is a lover no more,
Attend to my counsel, nor blush to be taught,
That prudence must cherish what beauty has caught.*

*The bloom of your cheek, and the glance of your eye,
Your roses and lilies may make the men sigh :
But roses, and lilies, and sighs, pass away,
And passion will die, as your beauties decay.*

*Use the man that you wed like your fav'rite guitar,
Tho' music in both, they are both apt to jar ;
How tuneful and soft from a delicate touch,
Not handled too roughly, nor play'd on too much.*

*The sparrow and linnet will feed from your hand,
Grow tame by your kindness, and come at command :
Exert with your husband the same happy skill,
For hearts, like young birds, may be tam'd to your will.*

*Be gay and good-humour'd, complying and kind,
Turn the chief of your care from your face to your mind ;
'Tis there that a wife may her conquests improve,
And Hymen shall rivet the fetters of love,*

THE END.

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When I should have
been a Lord of the
Silken Tassel, I should
have been a Lord of the
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TO THE QUEEN.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

THE English theatre throws itself, with this play, at your Majesty's feet, for favour and support.

As their public diversions are a strong indication of the genius of a people, the following scenes are an attempt to establish such as are fit to entertain the minds of a sensible nation; and to wipe off that aspersion of barbarity, which the virtuosi among our neighbours have sometimes thrown upon our taste.

The Provok'd Husband is, at least, an instance that an English comedy may, to an unusual number of days, bring many thousands of his Majesty's good subjects together, to their emolument and delight, with innocence. And however little share of that merit my unequal pen may pretend to, yet I hope the just admirers of Sir John Vanbrugh will allow I have, at worst, been a careful guardian of his orphan muse, by leading it into your Majesty's royal protection

The design of this play being chiefly to expose and reform the licentious irregularities that too often break upon the peace and happiness of the married state, where could so hazardous and unpopular an undertaking be secure, but in the protection of a princess, whose exemplary conjugal virtues have given such illustrious proof of what sublime felicity that holy state is capable?

And though a crown is no certain title to content; yet, to the honour of that institution be it said, the royal harmony of hearts that now enchants us from the throne, is a reproach to the frequent disquiet of those many insensible subjects about it who (from his Majesty's paternal care of his people) have more leisure to be happy: and 'tis our Queen's peculiar glory, that we often see her as eminently raised above her circle in private happiness, as in dignity.

Yet Heaven, Madam, that has placed you on such height, to be the more conspicuous pattern of your sex, had still left your happiness imperfect, had it not given those inestimable treasures of your mind and person to the only Prince on earth that could have deserved them. A crown, received from any but the happy Monarch's hand, who invested you with that which you now adorn, had only seemed the work of fortune; but *thus* bestowed, the world acknowledges it the due reward of Providence, for one you once so gloriously refused.

But as the fame of such elevated virtue has lifted the plain addresses of a whole nation into eloquence, the best repeated enlogiums on that theme are but intrusions on your Majesty's greater pleasure of secretly deserving them. I therefore beg leave to subscribe myself,

May it please your Majesty,

Your Majesty's most devoted,

most obedient, and

most humble servant,

COLLEY CIBBER.

TO THE READER.

HAVING taking upon me, in the prologue to this play, to give the auditors some short account of that part of it which Sir John Vanbrugh left unfinished, and not thinking it advisable, in that place, to limit their judgment by so high a commendation as I thought it deserved; I have, therefore, for the satisfaction of the curious, printed the whole of what he wrote separately, under the single title he gave it of, *A Journey to London*, without presuming to alter a line.

Yet, when I own, that in my last conversation with him (which chiefly turned upon what he had done towards a comedy) he excused his not shewing it me till he had reviewed it, confessing the scenes were yet undigested, too long, and irregular, particularly in the lower characters, I have but one excuse for publishing what he never designed should come into the world as it then was, *viz.* I had no other way of taking those many faults to myself, which may be justly found in my presuming to finish it.

However, a judicious reader will find in his original papers, that the characters are strongly drawn, new, spirited, and natural; taken from sensible observations on high and lower life, and from a just indignation at the follies in fashion. All I could gather from him of what he intended in the catastrophe, was, that the conduct of his imaginary fine lady had so provoked him, that he designed actually to have made her husband turn her out of doors. But when his performance came, after his decease, to my hands, I thought such violent measures, however just they might be in real life, were too severe for comedy; and would want the proper surprise, which is due to the end of a play. Therefore with much ado, (and it was as much as I could do with probability,) I preserved the lady's chastity, that the sense of her errors might make a reconciliation not impracticable; and I hope the mitigation of her sentence has been since justified by its success.

My inclination to preserve as much as possible of Sir John, I soon saw had drawn the whole into an unusual length; the reader will, therefore, find here a scene or two of the lower humour, that were left out after the first day's representation.

The favour the town has shewn to the higher characters in this play, is a proof that their taste is not wholly vitiated by the barbarous entertainments that have been so expensively set off to corrupt it: but, while the repetition of the best old plays is so apt to give satiety, and good new ones so scarce a commodity, we must not wonder that the poor actors are sometimes forced to trade in trash for a livelihood.

I cannot yet take leave of the reader, without endeavouring to do justice to those principal actors who have so evidently contributed to the support of this comedy: and I wish I could separate the praises due to them, from the secret vanity of an author; for all I can say will still insinuate, that they could not have so highly excelled, unless the skill of the writer had given them proper occasion. However, as I had rather appear vain than unthankful, I will venture to say of Mr. Wilkes*, that in the last act, I never saw any passion take so natural a possession of an actor, or any actor take so tender a possession of his auditors.—Mr. Mills†, too, is confessed by every body to have surprised them, by so far excelling himself.—But there is no doing right to Mrs. Oldfield‡, without putting people in mind of what others, of great merit, have wanted to come near her—"Tis not enough to say, she here out-did her usual excellence. I might therefore justly leave her to the constant admiration of those speciators who have the pleasure of living while she is an actress. But as this is not the only time she has been the life of what I have given the public, so, perhaps, my saying a little more of so memorable an actress, may give this play a chance to be read, when the people of this age shall be ancestors—May it therefore give emulation to our successors of the stage, to know, that

* In Lord Townly.

† Mr. Manly.

‡ Lady Grace.

to the ending of the year 1727, a cotemporary comedian relates, that Mrs. Oldfield was then in her highest excellence of action, happy in all the rarely found requisites that meet in one person to complete them for the stage.—She was in stature just rising to that height, where the graceful can only begin to shew itself; of a lively aspect, and a command in her mien, that, like the principal figure in the finest painting, first seizes, and longest delights the eye of the spectators. Her voice was sweet, strong, piercing, and melodious; her pronunciation voluble, distinct, and musical; and her emphasis always placed where the spirit of the sense, in her periods, only demanded it. If she delighted more in the higher comic than in the tragic strain, 'twas because the last is too often written in a lofty disregard of nature. But in characters of modern practised life, she found occasions to add the particular air and manner which distinguished the different humours she presented; whereas, in tragedy, the manner of speaking varies as little as the blank verse it is written in.—She had one peculiar happiness from nature; she looked and maintained the agreeable, at a time when other fine women only raise admirers by their understanding.—The spectator was always as much informed by her eyes as her elocution; for the look is the only proof that an actor rightly conceives what he utters, there being scarce an instance, where the eyes do their part, that the elocution is known to be faulty. The qualities she had acquired, were the genteel and the elegant; the one in her air, and the other in her dress, never had her equal on the stage; and the ornaments she herself provided (particularly in this play) seemed in all respects the *paraphernalia* of a woman of quality. And of that sort were the characters she chiefly excelled in; but her natural good sense and lively turn of conversation, made her way so easy to ladies of the highest rank, that it is a less wonder if, on the stage, she sometimes was what might have become the finest woman in real life to have supported,

LIFE OF COLLEY CIBBER, ESQ.

THE English stage has been much indebted to Cibber both as an actor and a writer; and in the latter character doubly so, by his being not only a great assistant in supporting his numerous and entertaining dramatic pieces, but also its historiographer through a very long and important period. He has given us so pleasing a detail of the most material circumstances of his life, that I cannot apply to a more perfect source of intelligence. From which the greatest part of the following account will, in as concise a manner as possible, be extracted.

Mr. Cibber was born on the 6th of November, O. S. 1671, in Southampton-street, Covent-Garden. His father, Caius Gabriel Cibber, was a native of Holstein, and came into England to follow his profession of a statuary some time before the restoration of Charles II. The eminence he attained to in his art may be judged from the two celebrated images of raging and melancholy madness on the two piers of the great gate of Bethlehem hospital, and also by the basso relievo on the pedestal of that stupendous column called the Monument, erected in commemoration of the great fire of London in 1666. His mother was the daughter of William Colley, Esq. of Glaiston in Rutlandshire, whose father, Sir Anthony Colley, by his steady attachment to the royal cause, during the troubles of King Charles I.'s reign, he reduced his estate from three thousand to three hundred pounds *per annum*. The family of the Colleys, though extinct by the death of our laureat's uncle Edward Colley, Esq. from whom our author received his Christian name, and who was the last heir male of it, had been a very ancient one; it appearing from Wright's History of Rutlandshire, that they had been sheriffs and members of parliament from the reign of Henry VII. to the latter end of Charles I. In 1682, he was sent to the free-school of Grantham in Lincolnshire. About 1689, he was taken from school to stand for the election of boys into Winchester College: he had

no farther recommendation than his merit, and his being descended by the mother's side from William of Wickham the founder; this did not avail, and for want of interest he lost his election. Rather pleased with what he looked on as a reprieve from the confined life of a school-boy, than piqued at the loss, he returned to London, and there early conceived an inclination for the stage, which he thought proper to suppress; and therefore wrote down to his father, who was at that time employed at Chatsworth in Derbyshire, by the Earl (afterwards Duke) of Devonshire, in the raising his magnificent seat. In his letter he requested he might be sent as soon as possible to the university. This request his father complied with, and assured him in his answer, that as soon as his leisure would permit, he would go with him to Cambridge; but in the mean time sent for him to Chatsworth, that he might in the interim be more immediately under his own care.

Before young Cibber could set out on his journey for that place, the Prince of Orange, afterwards King William III. had landed in the west, so that when our author came to Nottingham, he found his father in arms among the forces which the Earl of Devonshire had raised to aid that prince. The old man considering this as a very proper season for a young fellow to distinguish himself; and being too far advanced in years to endure the fatigue of a winter campaign, entreated the Earl of Devonshire to accept of his son in his place, which his lordship not only consented to, but promised that when affairs were settled he would farther provide for him. Thus all at once was the current of Cibber's fortune entirely turned into a new channel, his thoughts of the university were smothered in ambition, and the intended academician converted, to his inexpressible delight, into a campaigner.

From Nottingham the troops marched to Oxford, where the prince and princess of Denmark met. Here the troops continued in quiet quarters till the settling

of the public tranquillity, when they were remanded back to Nottingham, and those who chose were granted their discharge, among whom was our author, who now quitted the field and the hopes of military preferment, and returned to his father at Chatsworth. His expectations now of future fortune, in a great measure depended upon the promises of patronage he had received from the Earl of Devonshire, who, on being reminded of them, desired his father to send him to London in the winter, when he would consider of some provision for him. Our author, with equal honour and candour, acknowledges that it might well require time to consider it, for it was then much harder to know what he was really fit for, than to have got him any thing he was not fit for. During his period of attendance on this nobleman, a frequent application to the amusements of the theatre, awakened in him a passion for the stage, which he seemed now determined on pursuing as his *summum bonum*, and in spite of father, mother, or friends, to fix on as his *ne plus ultra*.

In February 1689, our author first became a dangler about the theatre, where for some time he considered the privilege of every day seeing plays a sufficient consideration for the best of his services; so that he was full three quarters of a year before he was taken into a salary of ten shillings *per* week. The insufficiency of his voice, and the disadvantage of a meagre person, were bars to his setting out as a tragedian; and all that seemed promising in him was an aptness of ear, and in consequence of that a justness in his manner of speaking. The parts he played were very trivial; that in which he was first taken any considerable notice of being of no greater consequence than the Chaplain in the *Orphan*; and he informs us, that the commendations he received on that occasion from Goodman, a veteran of eminence on the stage, which he had at that time quitted, filled him with a transport which could scarcely be exceeded by those of Alexander or Charles XII. at the head of their vic-

torious armies. His next step to fame was in consequence of Queen Mary's having commanded the *Double Dealer* to be acted, when Mr. Kynaston, who originally played Lord Touchwood, being so ill as to be entirely incapable of going on for it, Mr. Cibber, on the recommendation of Congreve, the author of the play, undertook the part, and at a very short notice performed it so well, that Mr. Congreve not only paid him some very high compliments on it, but recommended him to an enlargement of salary from fifteen to twenty shillings *per week*.

He married in the year 1693, before he was quite twenty-two years of age, at a time when he himself informs us he had no more than twenty pounds a year, which his father allowed him, and the salary from the theatre, which could not amount to above thirty pounds *per annum* more. The consent of the young lady's father was not obtained, though he afterwards thought proper to give her some fortune, yet in the suddenness of his resentment he had put it out of his power to bestow on her all that he had originally intended, by appropriating great part of what he had so designed her to the building of a little retirement on the Thames, which was called *Shore's Folly*, and which has been demolished many years past.

But to proceed to his dramatic history. It appears his success did not greatly elevate the rank of estimation in which he stood with the patentees as an actor; for on the opening of Drury-Lane theatre in 1695, with the remainder of the old company, on the revolt of Betterton and several of the principal performers to Lincoln's Inn Fields, an occasional prologue which he had written, although acknowledged the best that had been offered, and very readily paid for, yet would not be admitted on any other terms than his absolutely relinquishing any claim to the speaking it himself.

Soon after his accepting, on a sudden emergency, the part of Fondlewife in the *Old Batchelor*, in which, by the closest imitation of Dogget, who had been the original performer of it, not only in dress,

but in voice and manner, he obtained an almost unbounded plaudit from the audience, which gave him additional reputation; yet not only this, but even the applause which in the ensuing year he obtained, both as an author and actor, by his first comedy, called *Love's Shift*, or *The Fool in Fashion*, were insufficient to promote him to any considerable cast of parts till the year 1697, when Sir John Vanbrugh did him a double honour, viz. first, by borrowing the hint of his comedy for the writing of his *Relapse*, by way of sequel to it; and secondly by fixing on him for the performance of his favourite character in it of Lord Fop-pington. In 1707, however, we find him considered by Mr. Rich, the patentee, as of some consequence, by his excepting him from the number of the performers whom he permitted Mr. Swiney to engage with for his theatre in the Haymarket (though our author, on finding himself slightly used by this manager, paid no regard to that exception, but joined Swiney); and in the ensuing year, when his friend Colonel Brett obtained a fourth share in the patent, and that the performers formed a coalition, and returned to Drury-Lane, Mr Cibber also conceded to the treaty, and returned with them: but, on the silencing of the patent in 1709, he, together with Wilks, Dogget, and Mrs. Oldfield, went over again to Mr. Swiney.

In 1711, he became united as joint patentee with Collier, Wilks, and Dogget, in the management of Drury-Lane theatre. And afterwards in a like partnership with Booth, Wilks, and Sir Rich. Steele. During his latter period, which did not entirely end till 1731, the English stage was perhaps in the most flourishing state it ever enjoyed. But the loss of Booth, Mrs. Oldfield, Mrs. Porter, and Mr. Wilks, lopping off its principal supports, Mr. Cibber sold out his share of the patent, and retired from the public business of the stage, to which however he, at a few particular periods, occasionally returned, performing at no less a salary than fifty guineas per night; and in the year 1745, though upwards of seventy-four,

he appeared in the character of Pandulph the pope's legate, in his own tragedy called *Papal Tyranny*, which he performed, notwithstanding his advanced age, with great vigour and spirit.

The vacant laurel he had been promoted to on the death of Mr. Eusden, in the year 1730, and the salary annexed, together with what he had saved from the emoluments of the theatre, and the sale of his share in the patent, set him above the necessity of continuing on it. After a number of years passed in the utmost ease, gaiety, and good-humour, he departed this life on the 12th of December 1757; his man-servant, whom he had talked to by his bed-side at six in the morning, in seeming good health, found him dead at nine, lying on his pillow just as he left him. He had just completed his 86th year.

Mr. Cibber has, in his own Apology for his Life, drawn so open and candid a portrait of himself, that I can by no means do more justice to his character than by taking separately the several features of that portrait to enable the reader to form an idea of him in the several points of view, of a man, an actor, and a writer.

A sprightly readiness of wit and repartee, which frequently enabled him to keep the laugh in his favour, with a fund of good-nature which was not to be ruffled when the jest happened to run against him; together with a great natural quickness of parts, and an intimate acquaintance with elegant and polite life; seem to be the principle materials of which his character was composed. Few men had more personal friends and admirers, and few men perhaps a greater number of undeserved enemies. A steady attachment to those revolutionary principles which he first set out with in life, though not pursued with virulence or offence to any one, created a party against him which almost constantly prevented his receiving those advantages from his writings, or that applause for his acting, which both justly merited. Yet, that the malevolence of his opponents had very little effect on his

spleen is apparent through the whole course of his disputes with Mr. Pope, who, though a much superior writer with respect to sublimity and correctness, yet stood very little chance when obliged to encounter with the keenness of his raillery, and the easy unaffected nonchalance of his humour. In a word, he seemed most truly of Sir Harry Wildair's temper; nor did it seem within the power of age to subdue his cheerful disposition. His easy good-humour, liveliness of conversation, and a peculiar happiness he had in telling a story, made him the life of every company; and but for the too evident marks of the hand of time on his features, he might have been imagined a young man. He was possessed of great humanity, benevolence, and universal philanthropy; and, by continued actions of charity, compassion, and beneficence, ever bore the strongest testimonial to his being master of that brightest of all sublunary gems, a truly good heart.

As an actor, nothing can surely be a stronger proof of his merit than the eminence which he attained to in that profession, in opposition to all the disadvantages which, by his own account, we find he had to struggle with. For, exclusive of the pains taken by many of his cotemporaries to keep him below the notice of the public, nature seemed herself to oppose his advancement.

His person at first, though not ill-made, was, he tells us, meagre, (but this defect was amended, as he latterly had a figure of sufficient fullness and weight for any part); his complexion was pale and dismal; and his voice weak, thin, and inclining to the treble. His greatest advantages seem to have been those of a very accurate ear, and a critical judgment of nature. His chief excellency lay in the walk of fops and feeble old men in comedy, in the former of which he does not appear ever to have been excelled in any period before him, or nearly equalled in any since. It is also apparent that he must have had great merit in tragedy as well as comedy, since the impression he

made on the audience was nearly the same in both; for it is well known that his excellence in representing the fops induced many to imagine him as great a coxcomb in real life as he appeared to be on the stage, so, he informs us, that from the delight he seemed to take in performing the villainous characters in tragedy, half his auditors were persuaded that a great share of the wickedness of them must have been in his own nature. But this, he confesses, that he considered rather as a praise than a censure of his performance, since aversion in that case is nothing more than an hatred incurred for being like the thing one ought to be like.

The third and last view in which we are to consider him is that of a writer. In this character he was at times very unjustly and severely treated by some of his cotemporary critics; but by none with more harshness than Mr. Pope. Party zeal, seems to have had a large share in exciting opposition against him, since the audience has, through a course of a century, received great pleasure from most of his plays, which have constantly formed part of the entertainment of every season, and many of them repeatedly performed with that approbation which they undoubtedly merit. The most important charge against him seems to have been, that his plots were not always his own, which reflection would have been just had he produced no plays but such as he had altered from other authors; but in his first letter to Mr. Pope he assures us, and with great truth, that his *Fool in Fashion*, and *Careless Husband*, in particular, were as much (if not so valuable) originals as any thing his antagonist had ever written. And in excuse for those which he did only alter, or indeed compile from others, it is evident that they were for the most part composed by collecting what little was good in several pieces which had no success, and were laid aside as theatrical lumber. On this account he was frequently treated as a plagiarist; yet it is certain that many of those plays which had been dead to the stage

out of all memory, have, by his assisting hand, not only been restored to life, but have even continued ever since in full spirit and vigour. On this account surely the public and the original authors are greatly indebted to him; that sentiment of the poet being certainly true,

Chi trae l'Uom del Sepolcro, ed in Vita lo serba.

PETRARCH.

Nor have other writers been so violently attacked for the same fault. Mr. Dryden thought it no diminution of his fame to take the same liberty with the *Tempest* and the *Troilus and Cressida* of Shakspeare. Nor do these altered plays, as Mr. Cibber justly pleads, take from the merit of those more successful pieces, which were entirely his own. A taylor that can make a new coat well, is not surely the worse workman because he can mend an old one: a cobbler may be allowed to be useful, though no one will contend for his being famous; nor is any man blamable for doing a little good, though he cannot do so much as another. Besides, Mr. Cibber candidly declares, that whenever he took upon him to make some dormant play of an old author fit for the stage, it was honestly not to be idle that set him to work, as a good housewife will mend old linen when she has no better employment. But when he was more warmly engaged by a subject entirely new, he only thought it a good subject, when it seemed worthy of an abler pen than his own, and might prove as useful to the hearer as profitable to himself. And, indeed, this essential piece of merit must be granted to his own original plays, viz. that they always tend to improve the mind, as well as to entertain; that vice and folly, however pleasingly habited, are constantly lashed, ridiculed, or reclaimed in them, and virtue as constantly rewarded.

There is an argument, indeed, which might be pleaded in favour of this author, were his plays possessed of a much smaller share of merit than is to be found in them; which is, that he wrote, at least in the early part of his life, through necessity, for the

support of his increasing family; his precarious income as an actor being then too scanty to supply it with the necessaries of life : and with great pleasantry he acquaints us, that his muse and his spouse were equally prolific ; that the one was seldom mother of a child, but in the same year the other made him the father of a play ; and that they have had a dozen of each sort between them, of both which kinds some died in their infancy, and near an equal number of each were alive when he quitted the theatre. No wonder, then, when the muse is only called upon by family duty, that she should not always rejoice in the fruit of her labour. This excuse, I say, might be pleaded in Mr. Cibber's favour : but I must confess myself of the opinion, that there is no occasion for the plea, and that his plays have merit enough to speak in their own cause, without the necessity of begging indulgence. His plots, whether original or borrowed, are lively and full of business, yet not confused in the action, nor bungled in the catastrophe. His characters are well-drawn, and his dialogue easy, genteel, and natural. And if he has not the intrinsic wit of a Congreve or a Vanbrugh, yet there is a luxuriance of fancy in his thoughts which gives an almost equal pleasure, and a purity in his sentiments and morals much to be admired. In a word, I think the English stage is as much obliged to Mr. Cibber for a fund of rational entertainment as to any dramatic writer this nation has ever produced, Shakspeare only excepted ; and one unanswerable evidence of the merits of his plays is the satisfaction the public always express at the performance of them ; for although the number of his dramatic pieces is very extensive, most of them are now, and seem likely to continue among the acting and favourite plays.

As a writer, exclusive of the stage, his two letters to Mr. Pope, and his *Apology for his own Life*, are too well known, and too justly admired to leave me any room to expatiate on their worth. His dramatic pieces are as follow :

1. *Love's last Shift.* A Comedy. 4to. 1696.
2. *Woman's Wit.* A Comedy. 4to. 1697.
3. *Xerxes.* A Tragedy. 4to. 1699.
4. *Love makes a Man.* A Comedy. 4to. 1700.
5. *King Richard the Third.* A Tragedy. 4to. 1700.
6. *She wou'd and She wou'd not.* A Comedy. 4to. 1703.
7. *Careless Husband.* A Comedy. 4to. 1704.
8. *Perolla and Izadora.* A Tragedy. 4to. 1706.
9. *School-Boy.* A Farce. 4to. 1707.
10. *Comical Lovers.* A Comedy. 4to. 1707.
11. *Double Gallant.* A Comedy. 4to. 1707.
12. *Lady's last Stake.* A Comedy. 4to. 1708.
13. *Rival Fools.* A Comedy. 4to. 1709.
14. *Venus and Adonis.* A Masque. 8vo. 1715.
15. *Myrtillo.* A Pastoral Interlude. 8vo. 1715.
16. *Nonjuror.* A Comedy. 8vo. 1718.
17. *Ximena.* A Tragedy. 8vo. 1719.
18. *Refusal.* A Comedy. 8vo. 1720.
19. *Hob; or, The Country Wake.* A Farce. 12mo. 1720.
20. *Cæsar in Egypt.* A Tragedy. 8vo. 1725.
21. *Provok'd Husband.* A Comedy, (part by Sir John Vanbrugh.) 8vo. 1727.
22. *Rival Queens.* A Burlesque Tragedy. 8vo. 1729.
23. *Love in a Riddle.* A Pastoral. 8vo. 1729.
24. *Damon and Phillida.* A Ballad Opera. 8vo. 1729.
25. *Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John.* A Tragedy. 8vo. 1745.

His name is put to an Opera called *Chuck*.

THE EDITOR.



CRITIQUE
ON
THE PROVOK'D HUSBAND,
OR,
A JOURNEY TO LONDON.

"THE design of this play," as Cibber states it, in his Dedication to the Queen, "is to expose and reform the licentious irregularities, that too often break in upon the peace and happiness of the married state;" and it appears from his Address to the Reader, that Sir John Vanbrugh had meditated to inflict unmitigated punishment upon "his imaginary fine lady, by making her husband turn her out of his doors;" but he, upon whom the task of combining these unfinished scenes devolved, "thought these violent measures too severe for comedy, and with much ado preserved the lady's chastity, that the sense of her errors might make a reconciliation not impracticable."

I cannot doubt but Cibber's judgment decided rightly in this circumstance, and though he speaks with great modesty "of taking the many faults to himself, which may be justly found in his presuming to finish it," I must think, that he who collects and models these disjointed parts into the form, consistency, and regularity of a whole, perfect in its proportions, and beautiful in its construction, is entitled to a full participation in the fame that accrues to its first projector from the successful representation of it.

I perfectly remember to have heard Mr. Doddington relate, that Vanbrugh told him, that he had sketched out some loose scenes, which, in quantity, were enough for a comedy, but which had no plan or properties of an entire composition in them, and this confirms the description which Cibber gives of them in his prologue:—

“ Such was the piece his latest pen design’d,

“ But left no traces of his plan behind;

“ Luxuriant scenes, unprun’d, and half-contriv’d.”

I further recollect a curious anecdote respecting this comedy, which, in the long course of my intimate habits with Mr. Doddington, I have heard him mention more than once, which is, that he was present at the first night of this comedy; and when the audience, who, in their imagination, gave the comic part of the plot to Cibber, were pushing at him in the character of Sir Francis Wronghead, with a violence that seem’d to threaten condemnation to the play, Cibber stopped the dialogue, and, coming forward to the front of the stage, addressed the pit in effect as follows:—“ Gentlemen, I humbly conceive, that the
 “ disapprobation you are led to express of these parti-
 “ cular scenes, must arise from your idea, that I am
 “ the author of them, and have presumed to attach
 “ them to the graver plan of a much superior writer,
 “ now no more. I beg leave, therefore, to assure
 “ you, that it is not in this part of the comedy you
 “ are to look for me. The character, in which I now
 “ appear before you, and every thing relating to the
 “ Journey to London, so distinguished, are entirely
 “ from the pen of Sir John Vanbrugh, and permit me
 “ to warn you of this, lest you should be induced to
 “ disgrace yourselves, by damning the finest specimen
 “ of comic writing that the stage is in possession of.”

As I have no doubt that Mr. Doddington was correct in his fact, I am glad that I recollect an anecdote so apposite to the subject I am upon, and which did not occur to me when speaking of that distinguished person in my Memoirs lately published. The merit,

therefore, is with Cibber, of having twice rescued a production that does honour to the English stage. Yet he and Vanbrugh, who, in this instance, have given dignity as well as lustre to the dramatic muse, were singled out to be the butts of Pope and Swift, who could as easily have built the Edystone with their own hands, as they could have written this play, and of whom it may be said, that malice was the proper whetstone of their wit.

As I think it more within the province of the dramatic poet to deal out pardon to repentant characters, than punishment to obdurate ones, I am much inclined to believe, that the play was greatly benefited by reversing Vanbrugh's plan with respect to Lady Townly, especially if it had included the loss of her honour, which, Cibber says, he had such difficulty to save; for though I can well conceive that Vanbrugh would have work'd up a striking and impressive catastrophe, according to his own design, yet I have no scruple to give my voice in favour of the alteration, by which the chastity of the wife, and of course the decorum of the stage, was preserved from violation.

We now therefore know to a certainty, that it is to the author of *The Careless Husband* we are indebted for that beautiful and affecting scene, in which Lady Townly, awaking to a consciousness of her misconduct, and sinking into the arms of Lady Grace, thus intreats her husband, who is in the act of leaving her, to stay and listen to her last appeal,—“ Yet stay, my lord, “ the little I would say will not deserve an insult, “ and, undeserved, I know your nature gives it not: “ but, as you have called in friends to witness your “ resentment, let them be equal hearers of my last “ reply:” she then proceeds to relate what she rightly terms “ the story of her heart,” and a story it is, which never failed to reach the hearts of the hearers, when representation did it justice; a story which every young woman of beauty, birth, and fashion, ought to lay to her heart, every parent and guardian recommend as a lesson, and which gives to Cibber the fairly-earn'd

and well-deserv'd name of a dramatic poet, for ever dear to the stage, and worthy to be held in honour by posterity.

I must now conclude by offering a few remarks as they occur to me upon examination of this justly-favoured play. It should seem that Cibber found the manuscript of Vanbrugh's sketch under the single title of *A Journey to London*. It is clear, therefore, that the first designer meant to make the comic characters of the Wronghead family the most prominent objects of his dramatic groupe; but how he purposed to interweave his moral episode of the lord and lady, so as to melt it into harmony with his figures in the foreground, does not appear, and, probably, never did appear so as to illuminate his successor with any glimpse of his idea. Still it must be obvious to every man's judgment, that it ought to be done; the task of doing it of course devolved upon Cibber, and, it must be owned, he has not fully overcome the difficulty he had to encounter; for the two plots (so I must call them, as each is too considerable to be stiled an episode) have the property of the Asymptotes, of approaching without coincidence. The Wrongheads are indeed related to Manly; report is made of them to the Townlys, both by him and their servant Moody; but, except by intermediate agents, the chief characters never correspond: it remains, therefore, a chasm in the composition never healed, a breach in the structure of this admirable drama, which criticism cannot overlook, nor candour point to without regret.

In Lord Townly I can spy no fault: in his morality and right reason I discover no tincture of pedantry or parade. I will not say the same for Manly: his character does not please me; there is a rigidity in it that disgusts me, and in his introductory scene with Lord Townly and Lady Grace in the first act, he sets out by volunteering an insinuation to my lord, which he more clearly explains as he proceeds, to be that of turning Lady Townly out of doors, expressly saying, that "in strict justice she ought to go rather than

himself;" and again, when Lady Grace remonstrates to him, that "this is fomenting things," he replies, "Fomentations, madam, are sometimes necessary to dispel tumours: though I do not directly advise my lord to do this—This is only what upon the same provocation I would do myself." This strikes me as a mean, unmanly, vulgar, and unwarrantable way of creating an irreparable breach between husband and wife; and at the same time that he avows it to be the very measure he would take himself, he conceives, that he evades the just interpretation of Lady Grace, by the sneaking salvo that he *does not directly advise it*. The reader will take notice, that all this while nothing has been previously stated against Lady Townly to provoke this virulence, but that she is not come home, and is likely to stay out late.

There are many sentiments oracularly delivered by this gentleman in the same scene, which in my poor opinion do no honour either to his head or his heart; and in particular I should doubt if he is correct in his morality, when he finds an excuse for Lord Townly's present of five hundred pounds to his lady, upon the grounds of this consolatory reflection—"that the greater your indulgence, the more you have to reproach her with." This Mr. Manly is pleased to offer as a proof that he is "sometimes upon the side of good-nature;" but if Mr. Manly's good-nature leads him to confer favours for the purpose of accumulating reproaches, I should be apt to call him a most malicious benefactor, and much such a friend to his fellow-creature as the butcher is to the ox, when he feeds him fat to fit him for the slaughter.

Before I quite take leave of Mr. Manly, I should add, that he concludes this scene with a piece of information respecting his connection with the Wrong-head family, which he communicates to Lady Grace. "I enjoy at this time a pretty estate which Sir Francis was heir-at-law to, but—by his being a booby, the last will of an obstinate old uncle gave it to me—" and the obstinate Mr. Manly, being no booby, but

a very clever fellow, kept it with as little justice as the obstinate old uncle gave it to him. I can only say for myself, that I have more respect for the character of the disinterested booby, who lost his legal right thro' defect of nature, than for the successful heir who superseded him in that right, and was not ashamed to confess that what he got without merit he retained without mercy.

Having dwelt so long upon the serious characters of this play, I must leave the comic ones to recommend themselves. Though we must look back a little in point of time to find so much clownish ignorance as some of these exhibit, yet they have been drawn from nature: and if time had even broken their models, still these faithful copies would continue to please; for as long as knaves and sharpers shall persist to prey upon folly and credulity, so long will the family of the Wrongheads repeat their *Journey to London*, and be welcomed by the theatres.

R. CUMBERLAND.



PROLOGUE.

*THIS play took birth from principles of truth,
To make amends for errors past of youth.
A bard that's now no more, in riper days,
Conscious, review'd the licence of his plays :
And though applause his wanton muse had fir'd,
Himself condemn'd what sensual minds admir'd.
At length he own'd, that plays should let you see,
Not only what you are, but ought to be ;
Though vice was natural, 'twas never meant
The stage should shew it, but for punishment.
Warm with that thought, his muse once more took flame,
Resolv'd to bring licentious life to shame.
Such was the piece his latest pen design'd,
But left no traces of his plan behind.
Luxuriant scenes, unprun'd, or half-contriv'd ;
Yet, through the mass his native fire surviv'd :
Rough, as rich ore in mines, the treasure lay,
Yet still 'twas rich, and forms at length a play ;
In which the bold compiler boasts no merit,
But that his pains have sav'd your scenes of spirit :
Not scenes that would a noisy joy impart,
But such as hush the mind, and warm the heart.
From praise of hands, no sure account he draws,
But fix'd attention is sincere applause :
If then (for hard you'll own the task) his art
Can to these embryo-scenes new life impart,
The living proudly would exclude his lays,
And to the buried bard resigns the praise.*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD TOWNLY, *of a regular Life.*

MR. MANLY, *an Admirer of Lady Grace.*

SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD, *a Country Gentleman.*

SQUIRE RICHARD, *his Son, a mere Whelp.*

COUNT BASSET, *a Gamester.*

JOHN MOODY, *Servant to Sir Francis, an honest
Clown.*

LADY TOWNLY, *immoderate in her Pursuit of Plea-
sures.*

LADY GRACE, *Sister to Lord Townly, of exemplary
Virtue.*

LADY WRONGHEAD, *Wife to Sir Francis, inclined
to be a fine Lady.*

MISS JENNY, *her Daughter, pert and forward.*

MRS. MOTHERLY, *one that lets Lodgings.*

MYRTILLA, *her Niece, seduced by the Count.*

MRS. TRUSTY, *Lady Townly's Woman.*



THE PROVOK'D HUSBAND.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Lord TOWNLY'S Apartment.

Lord Townly, solus. WHY did I marry?—Was it not evident, my plain, rational scheme of life was impracticable, with a woman of so different a way of thinking?—Is there one article of it that she has not broke in upon?—Yes, let me do her justice—her reputation—that—I have no reason to believe is in question—But then how long her profligate course of pleasures may make her able to keep it is a shocking question! and her presumption while she keeps it—insupportable! for on the pride of that single virtue she seems to lay it down as a fundamental point, that the free indulgence of every other vice this fertile town affords, is the birth-right prerogative of a woman of quality—Amazing! that a creature so warm in the pursuit of her pleasures, should never cast one thought towards her happiness—Thus, while she admits of no lover, she thinks it a greater merit still, in her chastity, not to care for her husband; and while she herself is solacing in one continual round of cards and good company, he, poor wretch, is left at large, to take care of his own contentment—'Tis time, indeed, some care were taken, and speedily there shall be—Yet, let me not be rash—Perhaps, this disappointment of my heart may make me too impatient; and some tempers, when reproach'd, grow more untractable—Here she comes—Let me be calm awhile.

Enter Lady TOWNLY.

Going out so soon after dinner, madam?

Lady T. Lard, my lord! what can I possibly do at home?

Lord T. What does my sister, Lady Grace, do at home?

Lady T. Why, that is to me amazing! Have you ever any pleasure at home?

Lord T. It might be in your power, madam, I confess, to make it a little more comfortable to me.

Lady T. Comfortable! and so, my good lord, you would really have a woman of my rank and spirit stay at home to comfort her husband. Lord, what notions of life some men have!

Lord T. Don't you think, madam, some ladies' notions are full as extravagant?

Lady T. Yes, my lord, when the tame doves live coop'd within the pen of your precepts, I do think 'em prodigious indeed.

Lord T. And when they fly wild about this town, madam, pray what must the world think of 'em then?

Lady T. Oh, this world is not so ill-bred as to quarrel with any woman for liking it!

Lord T. Nor am I, madam, a husband so well-bred as to bear my wife's being so fond of it; in short, the life you lead, madam—

Lady T. Is to me the pleasantest life in the world.

Lord T. I should not dispute your taste, madam, if a woman had a right to please nobody but herself.

Lady T. Why, whom would you have her please?

Lord T. Sometimes her husband.

Lady T. And don't you think a husband under the same obligation?

Lord T. Certainly.

Lady T. Why, then, we are agreed, my lord—For if I never go abroad, till I am weary of being at home—which you know is the case—is it not equally reasonable, not to come home till one is weary of being abroad?

Lord T. If this be your rule of life, madam, 'tis time to ask you one serious question.

Lady T. Don't let it be long a coming then—for I am in haste.

Lord T. Madam, when I am serious, I expect a serious answer.

Lady T. Before I know the question?

Lord T. Psha!—Have I power, inadam, to make you serious by entreaty?

Lady T. You have.

Lord T. And you promise to answer me sincerely?

Lady T. Sincerely.

Lord T. Now then recollect your thoughts, and tell me seriously why you married me?

Lady T. You insist upon truth, you say?

Lord T. I think I have a right to it.

Lady T. Why, then, my lord, to give you at once a proof of my obedience and sincerity—I think—I married—to take off that restraint that lay upon my pleasures while I was a single woman.

Lord T. How, madam! is any woman under less restraint after marriage than before it?

Lady T. Oh, my lord, my lord! they are quite different creatures! Wives have infinite liberties in life, that would be terrible in an unmarried woman to take.

Lord T. Name one.

Lady T. Fifty if you please—To begin, then,—in the morning—A married woman may have men at her toilet; invite them to dinner; appoint them a party in the stage-box at the play; engross the conversation there; call them by their Christian names; talk louder than the players; from thence jaunt into the city; take a frolicsome supper at an India-House; perhaps, in her *gaieté de cœur*, toast a pretty fellow; then clatter again to this end of the town; break with the morning, into an assembly; crowd to the hazard-table; throw a familiar *levant* upon some sharp, lurching man of quality, and if he demands his money, turn it off with a loud laugh, and cry—you'll owe it him, to vex him, ha, ha!

Lord T. Prodigious.

[*Aside.*

Lady T. These now, my lord, are some few of the many modish amusements that distinguish the privilege of a wife from that of a single woman.

Lord T. Death, madam! what law has made these liberties less scandalous in a wife, than in an unmarried woman?

Lady T. Why the strongest law in the world, custom—custom time out of mind, my lord.

Lord T. Custom, madam, is the law of fools; but it shall never govern me.

Lady T. Nay, then, my lord, 'tis time for me to observe the laws of prudence.

Lord T. I wish I could see an instance of it.

Lady T. You shall have one this moment, my lord; for I think, when a man begins to lose his temper at home, if a woman has any prudence, why—she'll go abroad till he comes to himself again. [*Going.*

Lord T. Hold, madam—I am amaz'd you are not more uneasy at the life you lead. You don't want sense, and yet seem void of all humanity; for, with a blush I say it, I think I have not wanted love.

Lady T. Oh, don't say that, my lord, if you suppose I have my senses.

Lord T. What is it I have done to you? What can you complain of?

Lady T. Oh, nothing in the least! 'Tis true, you have heard me say, I have owed my Lord Lurcher an hundred pounds these three weeks—but what then—a husband is not liable to his wife's debts of honour, you know—and if a silly woman will be uneasy about money she can't be sued for, what's that to him? As long as he loves her, to be sure, she can have nothing to complain of.

Lord T. By Heaven, if my whole fortune thrown into your lap, could make you delight in the cheerful duties of a wife, I should think myself a gainer by the purchase.

Lady T. That is my lord, I might receive your

whole estate, provided you were sure I would not spend a shilling of it.

Lord T. No, madam; were I master of your heart, your pleasures would be mine: but, different as they are, I'll feed even your follies, to deserve it—Perhaps you may have some other trifling debts of honour abroad, that keep you out of humour at home—at least it shall not be my fault if I have not more of your company—There, there's a bill of five hundred—and now madam—

Lady T. And now, my lord, down to the ground I thank you—Now I am convinced, were I weak enough to love this man, I should never get a single guinea from him. [*Aside.*

Lord T. If it be no offence, madam—

Lady T. Say what you please, my lord; I am in that harmony of spirits it is impossible to put me out of humour.

Lord T. How long, in reason then, do you think that sum ought to last you?

Lady T. Oh, my dear, dear lord! now you have spoiled all again: how is it possible I should answer for an event that so utterly depends upon fortune? But to shew you that I am more inclined to get money than to throw it away—I have a strong prepossession, that with this five hundred, I shall win five thousand.

Lord T. Madam, if you were to win ten thousand, it would be no satisfaction to me.

Lady T. Oh, the churl! ten thousand! what not so much as wish I might win ten thousand!—Ten thousand! Oh, the charming sum! what infinite pretty things might a woman of spirit do with ten thousand guineas! O' my conscience, if she were a woman of true spirit—she—she might lose them all again.

Lord T. And I had rather it should be so, madam, provided I could be sure that were the last you would lose.

Lady T. Well, my lord, to let you see I design to

play all the good house-wife I can; I am now going to a party at *quadrille*, only to piddle with a little of it, at poor two guineas a fish, with the Duchess of Quiteright. [Exit.

Lord T. Insensible creature! neither reproaches or indulgence, kindness or severity, can wake her to the least reflection! Continual licence has lull'd her into such a lethargy of care, that she speaks of her excesses with the same easy confidence, as if they were so many virtues. What a turn has her head taken!—But how to cure it—I am afraid the physic must be strong that reaches her—Lenitives, I see, are to no purpose—take my friend's opinion—Manly will speak freely—my sister with tenderness to both sides. They know my case—I'll talk with them.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Manly, my lord, has sent to know if your lordship was at home.

Lord T. They did not deny me?

Serv. No, my lord.

Lord T. Very well; step up to my sister, and say, I desire to speak with her.

Serv. Lady Grace is here, my lord. [Exit *Serv.*

Enter Lady GRACE.

Lord T. So, lady fair; what pretty weapon have you been killing your time with?

Lady G. A huge folio, that has almost killed me—I think I have read half my eyes out.

Lord T. Oh! you should not pore so much just after dinner, child.

Lady G. That's true; but any body's thoughts are better always than one's own, you know.

Lord T. Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Leave word at the door, I am at home to nobody but Mr. Manly. [Exit *Serv.*

Lady G. And why is he excepted, pray, my lord?

Lord T. I hope, madam, you have no objection to his company?

Lady G. Your particular orders, upon my being here, look, indeed, as if you thought I had not.

Lord T. And your ladyship's inquiry into the reason of those orders, shews, at least, it was not a matter indifferent to you.

Lady G. Lord, you make the oddest constructions, brother!

Lord T. Look you, my grave Lady Grace—in one serious word—I wish you had him.

Lady G. I can't help that.

Lord T. Ha! you can't help it; ha, ha! The flat simplicity of that reply was admirable!

Lady G. Pooh, you tease one, brother!

Lord T. Come, I beg pardon, child—this is not a point, I grant you, to trifle upon; therefore, I hope you'll give me leave to be serious.

Lady G. If you desire it, brother; though, upon my word, as to Mr. Manly's having any serious thoughts of me—I know nothing of it.

Lord T. Well—there's nothing wrong in your making a doubt of it. But, in short, I find, by his conversation of late, that he has been looking round the world for a wife; and if you were to look round the world for a husband, he is the first man I would give to you.

Lady G. Then, whenever he makes me any offer, brother, I will certainly tell you of it.

Lord T. Oh! that's the last thing he'll do: he'll never make you an offer, till he's pretty sure it won't be refused.

Lady G. Now you make me curious. Pray, did he ever make any offer of that kind to you?

Lord T. Not directly; but that imports nothing: he is a man too well acquainted with the female world to be brought into a high opinion of any one woman, without some well-examined proof of her merit; yet I have reason to believe, that your good sense, your turn of mind, and your way of life, have brought him to so favourable a one of you, that a few days will reduce him to talk plainly to me; which as yet,

notwithstanding our friendship, I have neither declined nor encouraged him to.

Lady G. I am mighty glad we are so near in our way of thinking; for, to tell you the truth, he is much upon the same terms with me: you know he has a satirical turn; but never lashes any folly, without giving due encomiums to its opposite virtue: and, upon such occasions, he is sometimes particular, in turning his compliments upon me, which I don't receive with any reserve, lest he should imagine I take them to myself.

Lord T. You are right, child; when a man of merit makes his addresses, good sense may give him an answer, without scorn or coquetry.

Lady G. Hush! he's here—

Enter Mr. MANLY.

Man. My lord, your most obedient.

Lord T. Dear Manly, yours—I was thinking to send to you.

Man. Then, I am glad I am here, my lord—*Lady Grace*, I kiss your hands—What, only you two! How many visits may a man make, before he falls into such unfashionable company? A brother and sister soberly sitting at home, when the whole town is a gadding! I question if there is so particular a *tête à tête* again, in the whole parish of St. James's.

Lady G. Fie, fie, Mr. Manly! how censorious you are!

Man. I had not made the reflection, madam; but that I saw you an exception to it—Where's my lady?

Lord T. That, I believe, is impossible to guess.

Man. Then I won't try, my lord—

Lord T. But, 'tis probable I may hear of her, by that time I have been four or five hours in bed.

Man. Now, if that were my case—I believe I—But I beg pardon, my lord.

Lord T. Indeed, sir, you shall not: you will oblige me if you speak out; for it was upon this head I wanted to see you.

Man. Why, then, my lord, since you oblige me

to proceed—if that were my case—I believe I should certainly sleep in another house.

Lady G. How do you mean?

Man. Only a compliment, madam.

Lady G. A compliment!

Man. Yes, madam, in rather turning myself out of doors than her!

Lady G. Don't you think that would be going too far?

Man. I don't know but it might, madam; for, in strict justice, I think she ought rather to go than I.

Lady G. This is new doctrine, Mr. Manly.

Man. As old, madam, as love, honour, and obey. When a woman will stop at nothing that's wrong, why should a man balance any thing that's right?

Lady G. Bless me! but this is fomenting things—

Man. Fomentations, madam, are sometimes necessary to dispel tumours: though I do not directly advise my lord to do this—This is only what, upon the same provocation, I would do myself.

Lady G. Ay, ay, you would do! Bachelors' wives, indeed, are finely governed.

Man. If the married men's were as well—I am apt to think we should not see so many mutual plagues taking the air in separate coaches.

Lady G. Well, but suppose it your own case; would you part with your wife, because she now and then stays out in the best company?

Lord T. Well said, Lady Grace! Come, stand up for the privilege of your sex. This is like to be a warm debate. I shall edify:

Man. Madam, I think a wife, after midnight, has no occasion to be in better company than her husband's; and that frequent unreasonable hours make the best company—the worst she can fall into.

Lady G. But if people of condition are to keep company with one another, how is it possible to be done, unless one conforms to their hours?

Man. I can't find that any woman's good breeding obliges her to conform to other people's vices.

Lord T. I doubt, child, here we are got a little on the wrong side of the question.

Lady G. Why so, my lord? I can't think the case so bad as Mr. Manly states it—People of quality are not tied down to the rules of those who have their fortunes to make.

Man. No people, madam, are above being tied down to some rules, that have fortunes to lose.

Lady G. Pooh! I'm sure, if you were to take my side of the argument, you would be able to say something more for it.

Lord T. Well, what say you to that, Manly?

Man. Why, troth, my lord, I have something to say.

Lady G. Ay! that I should be glad to hear, now.

Lord T. Out with it.

Man. Then, in one word, this, my lord—I have often thought that the misconduct of my lady has, in a great measure been owing to your lordship's treatment of her.

Lady G. Bless me!

Lord T. My treatment!

Man. Ay, my lord, you so idolized her before marriage, that you even indulged her like a mistress after it; in short, you continued the lover, when you should have taken up the husband.

Lady G. Oh, frightful! this is worse than t'other; can a husband love a wife too well?

Man. As easy, madam, as a wife may love her husband too little.

Lord T. So; you two are never like to agree, I find.

Lady G. Don't be positive, brother—I am afraid we are both of a mind already. [*Aside.*] And do you, at this rate, ever hope to be married, Mr. Manly?

Man. Never, madam, till I can meet with a woman that likes my doctrine.

Lady G. 'Tis pity but your mistress should hear it.

Man. Pity me, madam, when I marry the woman that won't hear it.

Lady G. I think, at least, he can't say that's me.

[*Aside.*]

Man. And so, my lord, by giving her more power than was needful, she has none where she wants it; having such entire possession of you, she is not mistress of herself. And, mercy on us! how many fine women's heads have been turned upon the same occasion!

Lord T. Oh, Manly, 'tis too true! there's the source of my disquiet; she knows, and has abused her power: nay, I am still so weak, (with shame I speak it) 'tis not an hour ago, that in the midst of my impatience, I gave her another bill for five hundred to throw away.

Man. Well, my lord, to let you see I am sometimes upon the side of good-nature, I won't absolutely blame you; for the greater your indulgence, the more you have to reproach her with.

Lady G. Ay, Mr. Manly, here now I begin to come in with you. Who knows, my lord, but you may have a good account of your kindness?

Man. That I am afraid, we had not best depend upon. But since you have had so much patience, my lord, even go on with it a day or two more; and upon her ladyship's next sally, be a little rounder in your expostulations; if that don't work—drop her some cool hints of a determined reformation, and leave her—to breakfast upon them.

Lord T. You are perfectly right. How valuable is a friend in our anxiety!

Man. Therefore, to divert that, my lord, I beg, for the present, we may call another cause.

Lady G. Ay, for goodness' sake, let us have done with this.

Lord T. With all my heart.

Lady G. Have you no news abroad, Mr. Manly?

Man. *A propos*—I have some, madam; and I believe, my lord, as extraordinary in its kind——

Lord T. Pray, let us have it.

Man. Do you know that your country neighbour, and my wise kinsman, sir Francis Wronghead, is coming to town with his whole family?

Lord T. The fool! What can be his business here?

Man. Oh! of the last importance, I'll assure you—No less than the business of the nation.

Lord T. Explain.

Man. He has carried his election—against sir John Worthland.

Lord T. The deuce! What! for—for—

Man. The famous borough of Guzzledown.

Lord T. A proper representative, indeed!

Lady G. Pray, Mr. Manly, don't I know him?

Man. You have dined with him, madam, when I was last down with my lord, at Bellmont.

Lady G. Was not that he that got a little merry before dinner, and overset the tea-table in making his compliments to my lady?

Man. The same.

Lady G. Pray what are his circumstances? I know but very little of him.

Man. Then he is worth your knowing, I can tell you, madam. His estate, if clear, I believe, might be a good two thousand pounds a-year; though as it was left him, saddled with two jointures, and two weighty mortgages upon it, there is no saying what it is—But that he might be sure never to mend it, he married a profuse young hussy, for love, without a penny of money. Thus, having, like his brave ancestors, provided heirs for the family (for his dove breeds like a tame pigeon), he now finds children and interest-money making such a bawling about his ears, that at last he has taken the friendly advice of his kinsman, the good Lord Danglecourt, to run his estate two thousand pounds more in debt, to put the whole management of what is left into Paul Pillage's hands, that he may be at leisure himself to retrieve his affairs, by being a parliament-man.

Lord T. A most admirable scheme, indeed!

Man. And with this politic prospect, he is now upon his journey to London—

Lord T. What can it end in?

Man. Pooh! a journey into the country again.

Lord T. Do you think he'll stir, till his money is gone; or, at least, 'till the session is over?

Man. If my intelligence is right, my lord, he won't sit long enough to give his vote for a turnpike.

Lord T. How so?

Man. Oh, a bitter business; he had scarce a vote in the whole town, beside the returning officer. Sir John will certainly have it heard at the bar of the house, and send him about his business again.

Lord T. Then he has made a fine business of it, indeed.

Man. Which, as far as my little interest will go, shall be done in as few days as possible.

Lady G. But why would you ruin the poor gentleman's fortune, Mr. Manly?

Man. No, madam; I would only spoil his project, to save his fortune.

Lady G. How are you concerned enough to do either?

Man. Why—I have some obligations to the family, madam; I enjoy, at this time, a pretty estate, which sir Francis was heir at law to: but—by his being a booby, the last will of an obstinate old uncle gave it to me.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. [To Man.] Sir, here is one of your servants from your house desires to speak with you.

Man. Will you give him leave to come in, my lord?

Lord T. Sir—the ceremony's of your own making.

Enter MANLY's Servant.

Man. Well, James, what's the matter?

James. Sir, here is John Moody just come to town: he says sir Francis, and all the family, will be here to-night, and is in a great hurry to speak with you.

Man. Where is he?

James. At our house, sir; he has been gaping and stumping about the streets in his dirty boots, and asking every one he meets, if they can tell him where

he may have a good lodging for a Parliament-man, till he can hire a handsome house, fit for all his family, for the winter.

Man. I am afraid, my lord, I must wait upon Mr. Moody.

Lord T. Pr'ythee let us have him here; he will divert us.

Man. Oh, my lord, he's such a cub! Not but he's so near common sense, that he passes for a wit in the family.

Lady G. I beg, of all things, we may have him: I am in love with nature, let her dress be never so homely.

Man. Then desire him to come hither, James.

[*Exit James.*]

Lady G. Pray what may be Mr. Moody's post?

Man. Oh! his *maitre d'hotel*, his butler, his bailiff, his hind, his huntsman, and sometimes—his companion.

Lord T. It runs in my head, that the moment this knight has set him down in the house, he will get up, to give them the earliest proof of what importance he is to the public, in his own country.

Man. Yes, and when they have heard him, he will find, that his utmost importance stands valued at—sometimes being invited to dinner.

Lady G. And her ladyship, I suppose, will make as considerable a figure in her sphere, too.

Man. That you may depend upon: for (if I don't mistake) she has ten times more of the jade in her than she yet knows of: and she will so improve in this rich soil in a month, that she will visit all the ladies that will let her into their houses, and run in debt to all the shopkeepers that will let her into their books; in short, before her important spouse has made five pounds by his eloquence at Westminster, she will have lost five hundred at dice and quadrille in the parish of St. James's.

Lord T. So that, by that time he is declared unduly elected, a swarm of duns will be ready for

their money; and his worship—will be ready for a gaol.

Man. Yes, yes, that I reckon will close the account of this hopeful journey to London—But see, here comes the fore-horse of the team.

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Oh, honest John!

J. Moody. Ad's waunds and heart, Measter Manly! I'm glad I ha' fun ye. Lawd, lawd, give me a buss! Why, that's friendly naw. Flesh! I thought we would never ha' got hither. Well, and how do you do, Measter?—Good lack! I beg pardon for my bawldness—I did not see 'at his honour was here.

Lord T. Mr. Moody, your servant: I am glad to see you in London: I hope all the good family is well.

J. Moody. Thanks be prais'd, your honour, they are all in pretty good heart; tho'f we have had a power of crosses upo' the road.

Lady G. I hope my lady has had no hurt, Mr. Moody.

J. Moody. Noa, and please your ladyship, she was never in better humour: there's money enough stirring now.

Man. What has been the matter, John?

J. Moody. Why, we came up in such a hurry, you mun think that our tackle was not so tight as it should be.

Man. Come, tell us all—Pray, how do they travel?

J. Moody. Why, i' the awld coach, Measter; and 'cause my lady loves to do things handsome, to be sure, she would have a couple of cart-horses clapt to the four old geldings, that neighbours might see she went up to London in her coach and six; and so Giles Joulter, the ploughman, rides postilion.

Man. Very well! The journey sets out as it should do. [*Aside.*] What, do they bring all the children with them too?

J. Moody. Noa, noa, only the younk 'squire, and

Miss Jenny. The other foive are all out at board, at half-a-crown a head, a week, with John Growse, at Smoke-dunghill farm.

Man. Good again! a right English academy for younger children!

J. Moody. Anon, sir. [*Not understanding him.*]

“*Lady G.* Poor souls! What will become of them?

“*J. Moody.* Nay, nay, for that matter, madam, they are in very good hands: Joan loves 'um as tho' they were all her own: for she was wet-nurse to every mother's babe of 'um—Ay, ay, they'll ne'er want for a belly-full there!

“*Lady G.* What simplicity!

“*Man.* The Lud a' mercy upon all good folks! What work will these people make!

[*Holding up his hands.*]

Lord T. And when do you expect them here, John?

J. Moody. Why, we were in hopes to ha' come yesterday, an' it had no' been that th' awld Weazlebelly horse tired: and then we were so cruelly loaden, that the two fore-wheels came crash down at once, in Waggon-rut lane, and there we lost four hours 'fore we could set things to rights again.

Man. So they bring all the baggage with the coach, then?

J. Moody. Ay, ay, and good store on it there is—Why, my lady's geer alone were as much fill'd four portmantel trunks, beside the great deal box that heavy Ralph and the monkey sit upon behind.

Lord T. Lady G. and Man. Ha, ha, ha!

Lady G. Well, Mr. Moody, and pray how many are there within the coach?

J. Moody. Why, there's my lady, and his worship, and the young 'squire, and Miss Jenny, and the fat lapdog, and my lady's maid, Mrs. Handy, and Doll Tripe, the cook, that's all—Only Doll puked a little with riding backward; so they hoisted her into the coach-box, and then her stomach was easy.

Lady G. Oh, I see them! I see them go by me. Ha, ha!

[*Laughing.*]

J. Moody. Then you mun think, measter, there was some stowage for the belly, as well as the back too; children are apt to be famished upon the road; so we had such cargoes of plum-cake, and baskets of tongues, and biscuits, and checse, and cold boiled beef—And then, in case of sickness, bottles of cherry brandy, plague water, sack, tent, and strong beer so plenty, as made th' awld coach crack again. Mercy upon them! and send them all well to town, I say.

Man. Ay, and well out on't again, John.

J. Moody. Ods bud, measter! you're a wise man; and for that matter, so am I—Whoam's whoam, I say: I am sure we ha' got but little good e'er sin' we turn'd our backs on't. Nothing but mischief! Some devil's trick or other plagued us aw' the day lung. Crack, goes one thing! bawnce, goes another! Woa! says Roger—Then, sowse! we are all set fast in a slough. Whaw, cries miss! Scream, go the maids! and bawl, just as thof' they were stuck. And so, mercy on us! this was the trade from morning to night. But my lady was in such a murrain haste to be here, that set out she would, thof' I told her it was Childermas day.

Man. These ladies, these ladies, John—

J. Moody. Ay, measter! I ha' seen a little of them: and I find that the best—when she's mended, won't ha' much much goodness to spare.

Lord T. Well said, John. Ha, ha!

Man. I hope, at least, you and your good woman agree still.

J. Moody. Ay, ay; much of a muchness. Bridget sticks to me: tho' as for her goodness—why, she was willing to come to London too—But hauld a bit! Noa, noa, says I; there may be mischief enough done without you.

Man. Why that was bravely spoken, John; and like a man.

J. Moody. Ah, weast heart! were measter but hawf the mon that I am—Ods wookers! thof' he'll speak

stautly too, sometimes——But then he canno' hawld it—no, he canno' hawld it.

Lord T. Lady G. and Man. Ha, ha, ha!

J. Moody. Ods flesh! but I mun hie ine whoam; the coach will be coming every hour naw—but measter charged me to find your worship out: for he has hugey business with you: and will certainly wait upon you by that time he can put on a clean neck-cloth.

Man. Oh, John! I'll wait upon him.

J. Moody. Why you wonno' be so kind, wull ye?

Man. If you'll tell me where you lodge.

J. Moody. Just i' the street next to where your worship dwells, at the sign of the golden ball—It's gold all over; where they sell ribbons and flappits, and other sort of geer for gentlewomen.

Man. A milliner's?

J. Moody. Ay, ay, one Mrs. Motherly. Waunds, she has a couple of clever girls there, stitching i' th' fore-room.

Man. Yes, yes, she's a woman of good business, no doubt on't—Who recommended that house to you, John?

J. Moody. The greatest good fortune in the world, sure; for as I was gaping about the streets, who should look out at the window there, but the fine gentleman that was always riding by our coach-side at York races—Count—Basset; ay, that's he.

Man. Basset! Oh, I remember! I know him by sight.

J. Moody. Well, to be sure, as civil a gentleman to see to—

Man. As any sharper in town. [*Aside.*

J. Moody. At York, he used to breakfast with my lady every morning.

Man. Yes, yes, and I suppose her ladyship will return his compliment here in town. [*Aside.*

J. Moody. Well, measter—

Lord T. My service to sir Francis, and my lady, John.

Lady G. And mine, pray, Mr. Moody.

J. Moody. Ay, your honours; they'll be proud on't, I dare say.

Man. I'll bring my compliments myself: so, honest John—

J. Moody. Dear Measter Manly! the goodness of goodness bless and preserve you. [*Exit J. Moody.*]

Lord T. What a natural creature 'tis!

Lady G. Well, I can't but think John, in a wet afternoon in the country, must be very good company.

Lord T. Oh, the tramontane! If this were known at half the quadrille-tables in town, they would lay down their cards to laugh at you.

Lady G. And the minute they took them up again, they would do the same at the losers—But to let you see, that I think good company may sometimes want cards to keep them together; what, think you, if we three sat soberly down to kill an hour at ombre?

Man. I shall be too hard for you, madam.

Lady G. No matter; I shall have as much advantage of my lord, as you have of me.

Lord T. Say you so, madam; have at you then. Here! get the ombre table, and cards.

[*Exit Lord Townly.*]

Lady G. Come, Mr. Manly—I know you don't forgive me now.

Man. I don't know whether I ought to forgive your thinking so, madam. Where do you imagine I could pass my time so agreeably?

Lady G. I'm sorry my lord is not here to take his share of the compliment—But he'll wonder what's become of us.

Man. I'll follow in a moment, madam—

[*Exit Lady Grace.*]

It must be so—She sees I love her—yet with what unoffending decency she avoids an explanation! How amiable is every hour of her conduct! What a vile opinion have I had of the whole sex for these ten years past, which this sensible creature has recovered in less

than one! Such a companion, sure, might compensate all the irksome disappointments that pride, folly, and falsehood, ever gave me!

*Could women regulate, like her, their lives,
What halcyon days were in the gift of wives!
Vain rovers, then, might envy what they hate;
And only fools would mock the married state.* [Exit.]

ACT II. SCENE I.

Mrs. MOTHERLY's House. Enter Count BASSET and Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Count Basset. I TELL you there is not such a family in England for you, Do you think I would have gone out of your lodgings for any body that was not sure to make you easy, for the winter.

Moth. Nay, I see nothing against it sir, but the gentleman's being a parliament-man; and when people may, as it were, think one impertinent, or be out of humour, you know, when a body comes to ask for one's own——

Count Bas. Psha! Pr'ythee never trouble thy head his pay is as good as the bank—Why, he has above two thousand a-year.

Moth. Alas-a-day, that's nothing! your people of ten thousand a-year have ten thousand things to do with it.

Count Bas. Nay, if you are afraid of being out of your money, what do you think of going a little with me, Mrs. Motherly?

Moth. As how?

Count Bas. Why, I have a game in my hand, in which, if you'll croup me, that is, help me to play it, you shall go five hundred to nothing.

Moth. Say you so?—Why then I go, sir—and now, pray let's see your game.

Count Bas. Look you, in one word my cards lie thus—When I was down this summer at York,

I happened to lodge in the same house with this knight's lady that's now coming to lodge with you.

Moth. Did you so, sir?

Count Bas. And sometimes had the honour to breakfast, and pass an idle hour with her—

Moth. Very good; and here, I suppose, you would have the impudence to sup and be busy with her.

Count Bas. Psha! pr'ythee hear me.

Moth. Is this your game? I would not give six-pence for it. What! you have a passion for her pin-money—No, no, country ladies are not so flush of it!

Count Bas. Nay, if you won't have patience—

Moth. One had need to have a good deal, I am sure, to hear you talk at this rate. Is this your way of making my poor niece, Myrtila, easy?

Count Bas. Death! I shall do it still, if the woman will but let me speak—

Moth. Had you not a letter from her this morning?

Count Bas. I have it here in my pocket—this is it.

[*Shews it, and puts it up again.*]

Moth. Ay, but I don't find you have made any answer to it.

Count Bas. How the devil can I, if you won't hear me?

Moth. What hear you talk of another woman!

Count Bas. Oh, lud! Oh, lud! I tell you, I'll make her fortune—Ounds, I'll marry her!

Moth. A likely matter! if you would not do it when she was a maid, your stomach is not so sharp set now, I presume.

Count Bas. Hey-day! why your head begins to turn, my dear! The devil! you did not think I proposed to marry her myself.

Moth. If you don't, who the devil do you think will marry her?

Count Bas. Why, a fool—

Moth. Humph! there may be sense in that—

Count Bas. Very good—One for t'other, then; if I can help her to a husband, why should you not come into my scheme of helping me to a wife?

Moth. Your pardon, sir; ay, ay, in an honourable affair, you know you may command me—But pray, where is this blessed wife and husband to be had?

Count Bas. Now, have a little patience—You must know then, this country knight and his lady bring up in the coach with them their eldest son and a daughter, to teach them—to wash their faces, and turn their toes out.

Moth. Good—

Count Bas. The son is an unlick'd whelp, about sixteen, just taken from school; and begins to hanker after every wench in the family: the daughter, much of the same age; a pert, forward hussy, who, having eight thousand pounds left her by an old doting grandmother, seems to have a devilish mind to be doing in her way too.

Moth. And your design is to put her into business for life?

Count Bas. Look you, in short, Mrs. Motherly, we gentlemen, whose occasional chariots roll only upon the four aces, are liable, sometimes, you know, to have a wheel out of order; which, I confess, is so much my case at present, that my dapple greys are reduced to a pair of ambling chairmen. Now, if, with your assistance, I can whip up this young jade into a hackney-coach, I may chance, in a day or two after, to carry her, in my own chariot, *en famille*, to an opera. Now, what do you say to me?

Moth. Why, I shall not sleep for thinking of it. But how will you prevent the family smoaking your design?

Count Bas. By renewing my addresses to the mother.

Moth. And how will the daughter like that, think you?

Count Bas. Very well—whilst it covers her own affair.

Moth. That's true—it must do—but, as you say, one for t'other, sir; I stick to that—if you

don't do my niece's business with the son, I'll blow you with the daughter, depend upon't.

Count Bas It's a bet—pay as we go, I tell you; and the five hundred shall be staked in a third hand.

Moth. That's honest——But here comes my niece; shall we let her into the secret?

Count Bas. Time enough; may be I may touch upon it.

Enter MYRTILLA.

Moth. So niece, are all the rooms done out, and the beds sheeted?

Myr. Yes madam; but Mr. Moody tells us, the lady always burns wax in her own chamber, and we have none in the house.

Moth. Odso! then I must beg your pardon, Count; this is a busy time, you know. [*Exit Mrs. Motherly.*]

Count Bas. Myrtilla, how dost thou do, child?

Myr. As well as a losing gamester can.

Count Bas. Why, what have you lost?

Myr. What I shall never recover; and what's worse, you that have won it, don't seem to be much the better for it.

Count Bas. Why, child, dost thou ever see any body overjoyed for winning a deep stake six months after 'tis over.

Myr. Would I had never play'd for it!

Count Bas. Psha! hang these melancholy thoughts! we may be friends still.

Myr. Dull ones.

Count Bas. Useful ones, perhaps—suppose I should help thee to a good husband?

Myr. I suppose you'll think any one good enough, that will take me off o' your hands.

Count Bas. What do you think of the young country 'squte, the heir of the family that's coming to lodge here?

Myr. How should I know what to think of him?

Count Bas. Nay, I only give you the hint, child; it may be worth your while, at least to look about you—Hark! what bustle's that without?

Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY in haste.

Moth. Sir, sir! the gentleman's coach is at the door; they are all come.

Count Bas. What, already?

Moth. They are just getting out!—Won't you step and lead in my lady! Do you be in the way, niece; I must run and receive them.

[*Exit Mrs. Motherly.*

Count Bas. And think of what I told you.

[*Exit Count.*

Myr. Ay, ay; you have left me enough to think of as long as I live——A faithless fellow! I am sure I have been true to him; and for that only reason he wants to be rid of me. But while women are weak, men will be rogues; “and for a bane to both their
“ joys and ours, when our vanity indulges them in
“ such innocent favours as make them adore us, we
“ can never be well, till we grant them the very one
“ that puts an end to their devotion—But here comes
“ my aunt and the company.”

Mrs. MOTHERLY returns, shewing in Lady WRONG-HEAD, led by Count BASSET.

Moth. If your ladyship pleases to walk into this parlour, madam, only for the present, 'till your servants have got all your things in.

Lady Wrong. Well, dear sir, this is so infinitely obliging—I protest it gives me pain, tho', to turn you out of your lodgings thus.

Count Bas. No trouble in the least, madam; we single fellows are soon moved; besides, Mrs. Motherly's my old acquaintance, and I could not be her hindrance.

Moth. The Count is so well bred, madam, I dare say he would do a great deal more to accommodate your ladyship.

Lady Wrong. Oh, dear madam!—A good, well-bred sort of a woman.

[*Apart to the Count.*

Count Bas. Oh, madam! she is very much among

people of quality; she is seldom without them in her house.

Lady Wrong. Are there a good many people of quality in this street, Mrs. Motherly?

Moth. Now your ladyship is here, madam, I don't believe there is a house without them.

Lady Wrong. I am mighty glad of that; for, really, I think people of quality should always live among one another.

Count Bas. 'Tis what one would choose, indeed, madam.

Lady Wrong. Bless me! but where are the children all this while?

Moth. Sir Francis, madam, I believe is taking care of them.

Sir Fran. [*Within.*] John Moody! stay you by the coach, and see all our things out—Come children.

Moth. Here they are, madam.

Enter Sir FRANCIS, 'Squire RICHARD, and Miss JENNY.

Sir Fran. Well, Count, I mun say it, this was koynd, indeed.

Count Bas. Sir Francis, give me leave to bid you welcome to London.

Sir Fran. Psha! how dost do, mon?—Waunds, I'm glad to see thee! A good sort of a house this.

Count Bas. Is not that Master Richard?

Sir Fran. Ey, ey, that's young Hopeful—Why dost not baw, Dick?

'Squ. Rich. So I do, feyther.

Count Bas. Sir, I'm glad to see you—I protest Mrs. Jane is grown so, I should not have known her.

Sir Fran. Come forward, Jenny.

Jenny. Sure, papa! do you think I don't know how to behave myself?

Count Bas. If I have permission to approach her, Sir Francis.

Jenny. Lord, sir! I'm in such a frightful pickle—
[*Salute.*]

Count Bas. Every dress that's proper must become you, madam—you have been a long journey.

Jenny. I hope you will see me in a better to-morrow, sir.

[*Lady Wronghead whispers Mrs. Motherly, pointing to Myrtilla.*

Moth. Only a niece of mine, madam, that lives with me: she will be proud to give your ladyship any assistance in her power.

Lady Wrong. A pretty sort of a young woman—Jenny, you two must be acquainted.

Jenny. Oh, mamma, I am never strange in a strange place. [Salutes Myrtilla.

Myr. You do me a great deal of honour, madam—Madam, your ladyship's welcome to London.

Jenny. Mamma, I like her prodigiously; she called me my ladyship.

'Squ. Rich. Pray, mother, may'nt I be acquainted with her too?

Lady Wrong. You, you clown! stay 'till you learn a little more breeding first.

Sir Fran. Od's heart, my Lady Wronghead! why do you baulk the lad? How should he ever learn breeding, if he does not put himself forward!

'Squ. Rich. Why, ay, feyther, does mother think 'at I'd be uncivil to her?

Myr. Master has so much good humour, madam, he would soon gain upon any body.

[*He kisses Myrtilla.*

'Squ. Rich. Lo' you there, mother; and you would but be quiet, she and I should do well enough.

Lady Wrong. Why, how now, sirrah! boys must not be familiar.

'Squ. Rich. Why, an' I know nobody, how the murrain mun I pass my time here, in a strange place? Naw you and I, and sister, forsooth, sometimes, in an afternoon, may play at one and thirty bone-ace, purely.

Jenny. Speak for yourself, sir; d'ye think I play at such clownish games?

'*Squ. Rich.* Why, and you woant, yo' ma' let it aloane! then she and I, mayhap, will have a bawt at all-fours, without you.

Sir Fran. Noa, noa, Dick, that won't do neither; you mun learn to make one at ombre, here, child.

Myr. If master pleases, I'll shew him.

'*Squ. Rich.* What! the Humber! Hoy day! why does our river run to this tawn; feyther?

Sir Fran. Pooh! you silly tony! ombre is a geam at cards, that the better sort of people play three together at.

'*Squ. Rich.* Nay, the moare the merrier, I say; but sister is always so cross-grain'd—

Jenny. Lord! this boy is enough to deaf people—and one has really been stuff'd up in a coach so long, that—Pray, madam—could not I get a little powder for my hair?

Myr. If you please to come along with me, madam.

[*Exeunt Myr. and Jenny.*]

'*Squ. Rich.* What, has sister taken her away, naw! mess, I'll go and have a little game with 'em.

[*Exit after them.*]

Lady Wrong. Well, Count, I hope you won't so far change your lodgings, but you will come, and be at home here sometimes?

Sir Fran. Ay! ay! pr'ythee come and take a bit of mutton with us, naw and tan, when thouh'st naught to do.

Count Bas. Well, Sir Francis, you shall find I'll make but very little ceremony.

Sir Fran. Why, ay now, that's hearty!

Moth. Will your ladyship please to refresh yourself with a dish of tea, after your fatigue? I think I have pretty good.

Lady Wrong. If you please, Mrs. Motherly; but I believe we had best have it above stairs.

Moth. Very well, madam: it shall be ready immediately.

[*Exit Mrs. Motherly.*]

Lady Wrong. Won't you walk up, sir?

Sir Fran. Moody!

Count Bas. Shan't we stay for sir Francis, madam?

Lady Wrong. Lard! don't mind him: he will come if he likes it.

Sir Fran. Ay! ay! ne'er heed me—I have things to look after. [*Exeunt Lady Wrong. and Count Bas.*]

Enter JOHN MOODY.

J. Moody. Did your worship want muh?

Sir Fran. Aye, is the coach cleared, and all our things in?

J. Moody. Aw but a few handboxes, and the nook that's left o' the goose poy—But a plague on him, th' monkey has gin us the slip, I think—I suppose he's goon to see his relations; for here looks to be a power of um in this tawn—but heavy Ralph is skawered after him.

Sir Fran. Why, let him go to the devil! no matter, and the hawnds had had him a month agoe—but I wish the coach and horses had got safe to the inn! This is a sharp tawn, we mun look about us, here, John; therefore I would have you go along with Roger, and see that nobody runs away with them before they get to the stable.

J. Moody. Alas-a-day, sir, I believe our awld cattle won't yeasly be run away with to-night—but howsomever, we'st ta' the best care we can of 'um, poor sawls.

Sir Fran. Well, well! make haste—

[*Moody goes out and returns.*]

J. Moody. Ods flesh! here's Master Manly come to wait upo' your worship,

Sir Fran. Where is he?

J. Moody. Just coming in at threshold.

Sir Fran. Then goa about your business.

[*Exit Moody.*]

Enter MANLY.

Cousin Manly! Sir, I am your very humble servant.

Man. I heard you were come, sir Francis—and—

Sir Fran. Odsheart! this was kindly done of you naw.

Man. I wish you may think it so, cousin! for I confess, I should have been better pleased to have seen you in any other place.

Sir Fran. How soa, sir?

Man. Nay, 'tis for your own sake; I'm not concerned.

Sir Fran. Look you, cousin; thof' I know you wish me well; yet I don't question I shall give you such weighty reasons for what I have done, that you will say, sir, this is the wisest journey that ever I made in my life.

Man. I think it ought to be, cousin; for I believe you will find it the most expensive one—your election did not cost you a trifle, I suppose.

Sir Fran. Why ay! it's true! That—that did lick a little; but if a man's wise (and I han't fawn'd yet that I'm a fool), there are ways, cousin, to lick one's self whole again.

Man. Nay, if you have that secret—

Sir Fran. Don't you be fearful, cousin—you'll find that I know something.

Man. If it be any thing for your good, I should be glad to know it too.

Sir Fran. In short, then, I have a friend in a corner, that has let me a little into what's what, at Westminster—that's one thing.

Man. Very well! but what good is that to do you?

Sir Fran. Why not me, as much as it does other folks?

Man. Other people, I doubt, have the advantage of different qualifications.

Sir Fran. Why, aye! there's it naw! you'll say that I have lived all my days i' the country—what then—I'm o' the quorum—I have been at sessions, and I have made speeches there! aye, and at vestry too—and mayhap they may find here—that I have brought my tongue up to town with me! D'ye take me naw?

Man. If I take your case right, cousin, I am afraid the first occasion you will have for your eloquence

here, will be, to shew that you have any right to make use of it at all.

Sir Fran. How d'ye mean?

Man. That sir John Worthland has lodged a petition against you.

Sir Fran. Petition! why, aye! there let it lie—we'll find a way to deal with that, I warrant you!—Why, you forget, cousin, sir John's o' the wrung side, mon!

Man. I doubt, sir Francis, that will do you but little service; for in cases very notorious, which I take yours to be, there is such a thing as a short day, and dispatching them immediately.

Sir Fran. With all my heart! the sooner I send him home again, the better.

Man. And this is the scheme you have laid down to repair your fortune?

Sir Fran. In one word, cousin, I think it my duty! The Wrongheads have been a considerable family ever since England was England: and since the world knows I have talents wherewithal, they shan't say it's my fault, if I don't make as good a figure as any that ever were at the head on't.

Man. Nay, this project, as you have laid it, will come up to any thing your ancestors have done these five hundred years.

Sir Fran. And let me alone to work it: mayhap I hav'n't told you all, neither—

Man. You astonish me! what? and is it full as practicable as what you have told me?

Sir Fran. Ay, tho' I say it—every whit, cousin. You'll find that I have more irons i' the fire than one; I doan't come of a fool's errand!

Man. Very well.

Sir Fran. In a word, my wife has got a friend at court, as well as myself, and her dowghter Jenny is naw pretty well grown up—

Man. [*Aside.*—And what, in the devil's name; would he do with the dowdy?

Sir Fran. Naw, if I doan't lay in for a husband

for her, mayhap, i' this tawn, she may be looking out for herself.

Man. Not unlikely,

Sir Fran. Therefore I have some thoughts of getting her to be maid of honour.

Man. [*Aside.*]*—*Oh! he has taken my breath away; but I must hear him out—Pray, sir Francis, do you think her education has yet qualified her for a court?

Sir Fran. Why, the girl is a little too mettlesome, it's true; but she has tongue enough: she woan't be dash't! Then she shall learn to daunce forthwith, and that will soon teach her how to stond still you know.

Man. Very well; but when she is thus accomplish'd, you must still wait for a vacaney.

Sir Fran. Why, I hope one has a good chance for that every day, cousin; for if I take it right, that's a post, that folks are not more willing to get into, than they are to get out of—It's like an orange-tree, upon that accawnt—it will bear blossoms, and fruit that's ready to drop, at the same time.

Man. Well, sir, you best know how to make good your pretensions! But, pray, where is my lady, and my young cousin? I should be glad to see them too.

Sir Fran. She is but just taking a dish of tea with the Count, and my landlady—I'll call her dawn.

Man. No, no, if she's engaged, I shall call again.

Sir Fran. Odsheart! but you mun see her naw, cousin; what! the best friend I have in the world!—Here, sweetheart! [*To a servant without.*] pr'ythee, desire my lady and the gentleman to come dawn a bit; tell her here's cousin Manly come to wait upon her.

Man. Pray, sir, who may the gentleman be?

Sir Fran. You mun know him to be sure; why it's Count Basset.

Man. Oh! is it he?—Your family will be infinitely happy in his acquaintance.

Sir Fran. Troth! I think so too: he's the civillest man that ever I knew in my life—Why, here he would go out of his own lodgings, at an hour's warning,

purely to oblige my family. Wasn't that kind, naw?

Man. Extremely civil—the family is in admirable hands already. [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Then my lady likes him hugely—all the time of York races, she would never be without him.

Man. That was happy, indeed! and a prudent man, you know, should always take care that his wife may have innocent company.

Sir Fran. Why, aye! that's it! and I think there could not be such another!

Man. Why, truly, for her purpose, I think not.

Sir Fran. Only naw and tan, he—he stonds a leetle too much upon ceremony; that's his fault.

Man. Oh, never fear! he'll mend that every day—Mercy on us! what a head he has! [*Aside.*

Sir Fran. So, here they come!

Enter Lady WRONGHEAD, Count BASSET, and Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Lady Wrong. Cousin Manly, this is infinitely obliging; I am extremely glad to see you.

Man. Your most obedient servant, madam; I am glad to see your ladyship look so well, after your journey.

Lady Wrong. Why, really, coming to London is apt to put a little more life in one's looks.

Man. Yet the way of living, here, is very apt to deaden the complexion—and, give me leave to tell you, as a friend, madam, you are come to the worst place in the world for a good woman to grow better in.

Lady Wrong. Lord, cousin! how should people ever make any figure in life, that are always moaped up in the country.

Count Bas. Your ladyship certainly takes the thing in quite a right light, madam. Mr. Manly, your humble servant—a hem.

Man. Familiar puppy. [*Aside.*] Sir, your most obedient—I must be civil to the rascal, to cover my suspicion of him. [*Aside.*

Count Bas. Was you at White's this morning, sir?

Man. Yes, sir, I just called in.

Count Bas. Pray—what—was there any thing done there?

Man. Much as usual, sir; the same daily carcasses, and the same crows about them.

Count Bas. The Demoivre-Baronet had a bloody tumble yesterday.

Man. I hope, sir, you had your share of him.

Count Bas. No faith; I came in when it was all over—I think I just made a couple of bets with him, took up a cool hundred, and so went to the King's Arms.

Lady Wrong. What a genteel easy manner he has!
[*Aside.*

Man. A very hopeful acquaintance I have made here.
[*Aside.*

Enter 'Squire RICHARD, with a wet brown paper on his face.

Sir Fran. How naw, Dick; what's the matter with thy forehead, lad?

'Squ. Rich. I ha' gotten a knock upon't.

Lady Wrong. And how did you come by it, you heedless creature?

'Squ. Rich. Why, I was but running after sister, and t'other young woman, into a little room just naw: and so with that they slapp'd the door full in my face, and gave me such a whurr here—I thought they had beaten my brains out; so I got a dab of wet brown paper here, to swage it a while.

Lady Wrong. They served you right enough; will you never have done with your horse-play?

Sir Fran. Pooh, never heed it, lad; it will be well by to-morrow—the boy has a strong head.

Man. Yes, truly, his skull seems to be of a comfortable thickness.
[*Aside.*

Sir Fran. Come, Dick, here's cousin Manly—sir, this is your god-son.

'Squ. Rich. Honour'd godfeyther, I crave leave to ask your blessing.

Man. Thou hast it, child—and if it will do thee any good, may it be to make thee, at least, as wise a man as thy father.

Enter Miss JENNY.

Lady Wrong. Oh, here's my daughter too. Miss Jenny! don't you see your cousin, child?

Man. And as for thee, my pretty dear—[*Salutes her.*] may'st thou be, at least, as good a woman as thy mother.

Jenny. I wish I may ever be so handsome, sir.

Man. Hah, Miss Pert! Now that's a thought that seems to have been hatcht in the girl on this side Highgate. [Aside.

Sir Fran. Her tongue is a little nimble, sir.

Lady Wrong. That's only from her country education, sir Francis. You know she has been kept too long there—so I brought her to London, sir, to learn a little more reserve and modesty.

Man. Oh, the best place in the world for it—every woman she meets will teach her something of it—There's the good gentlewoman of the house looks like a knowing person; even she perhaps will be so good as to shew her a little London behaviour.

Moth. Alas, sir, Miss wont stand long in need of my instructions.

Man. That I dare say. What thou cans't teach her she will soon be mistress of. [Aside.

Moth. If she does, sir, they shall always be at her service.

Lady Wrong. Very obliging, indeed, Mrs. Motherly.

Sir Fran. Very kind and civil truly—I think we are got into a mighty good hawse here.

Man. Oh, yes, and very friendly company.

Count Bas. Humph! I gad I don't like his looks—he seems a little smoky—I believe I had as good brush off—If I stay, I don't know but he may ask me some odd questions.

Man. Well, sir, I believe you and I do but hinder the family--

Count Bas. It's very true, sir—I was just thinking of going—He don't care to leave me, I see: but it's no matter, we have time enough. [*Aside.*] And so, ladies, without ceremony, your humble servant.

[*Exit Count Basset, and drops a letter.*]

Lady Wrong. Ha! what paper's this? Some billet-doux, I'll lay my life; but this is no place to examine it.

[*Puts it in her pocket.*]

Sir Fran. Why in such haste, cousin?

Man. Oh, my lady must have a great many affairs upon her hands, after such a journey.

Lady Wrong. I believe, sir, I shall not have much less every day, while I stay in this town, of one sort or other.

Man. Why truly, ladies seldom want employment here, madam.

Jenny. And mamma did not come to it to be idle, sir.

Man. Nor you neither, I dare say, my young mistress.

Jenny. I hope not, sir.

Man. Ha, Miss Mettle!—Where are you going, sir?

Sir Fran. Only to see you to the door, sir.

Man. Oh, sir Francis, I love to come and go without ceremony.

Sir Fran. Nay, sir, I must do as you will have me—your humble servant.

[*Exit Manly.*]

Jenny. This cousin Manly, papa, seems to be but of an odd sort of a crusty humour—I don't like him half so well as the count.

Sir Fran. Pooh! that's another thing, child—Cousin is a little proud indeed; but however you must always be civil to him, for he has a deal of money, and nobody knows who he may give it to.

Lady Wrong. Psha! a fig for his money; you have so many projects of late about money, since you are a parliament man. What, we must make ourselves slaves to his impertinent humours, eight or ten years perhaps, in hopes to be his heirs, and then he will be just old enough to marry his maid.

Moth. Nay, for that matter, madam, the town says he is going to be married already.

Sir Fran. Who! cousin Manly?

Lady Wrong. To whom, pray?

Moth. Why, is it possible your ladyship should know nothing of it?—to my Lord Townly's sister, Lady Grace.

Lady Wrong. Lady Grace!

Moth. Dear madam, it has been in the newspapers!

Lady Wrong. I don't like that, neither.

Sir Fran. Naw, I do; for then it's likely it mayn't be true.

Lady Wrong. [*Aside.*] If it is not too far gone: at least it may be worth one's while to throw a rub in his way.

'Squ. Rich. Pray, feyther, haw lung will it be to supper?

Sir Fran. Odso! that's true; step to the cook, lad, and ask what she can get us.

“ *Moth.* If you please, sir, I'll order one of my
“ maids to shew her where she may have any thing
“ you have a mind to.

“ *Sir Fran.* Thank you kindly, Mrs. Motherly.

“ *'Squ. Rich.* Ods-flesh! what is not it i' the hawse
“ yet—I shall be famish'd—but hawld! I'll go and
“ ask Doll, an there's none o' the goose poy left.

“ *Sir Fran.* Do so, and do'st hear, Dick—see if
“ there's e'er a bottle o' the strong beer that came i'
“ th' coach with us—if there be, clap a toast in it,
“ and bring it up.

“ *'Squ. Rich.* With a little nutmeg and sugar,
“ shawn't I, feyther.

“ *Sir Fran.* Av, ay, as thee and I always drink it
“ for breakfast—Go thy ways!—and I'll fill a pipe i'
“ th' mean while.

[*Takes one from a pocket-case, and fills it.* Exit

'Squire Richard.

“ *Lady Wrong.* This boy is always thinking of his
“ belly.

“ *Sir Fran.* Why, my dear, you may allow him
“ to be a little hungry after his journey.

“ *Lady Wrong.* Nay, ev'n breed him your own
“ way—He has been cramming in or out of the coach
“ all this day, I am sure—I wish my poor girl could
“ eat a quarter as much.

“ *Jenny.* Oh, as for that I could eat a great deal
“ more, mamma; but, then, mayhap, I should grow
coarse, like him, and spoil my shape.

“ *Lady Wrong.* Ay, so thou wouldst, my dear.

“ *Enter 'Squire RICHARD, with a full tankard.*

“ *Squ. Rich.* Here, feyther, I ha' brougth it—it's
“ well I went as I did: for our Doll had just baked
“ a toast, and was going to drink it herself.

“ *Sir Fran.* Why then, here's to thee, Dick! [*Drinks.*

“ *'Squ. Rich.* Thank you, feyther.

“ *Lady Wrong.* Lord, sir Francis, I wonder you
“ can encourage the boy to swill so much of that
“ lubberly liquor—it's enough to make him quite
“ stupid.

“ *'Squ. Rich.* Why it never hurts me, mother;
“ and I sleep like a hawnd after it. [*Drinks.*

“ *Sir Fran.* I am sure I ha' drunk it these thirty
“ years, and by your leave, madam, I don't know
“ that I want wit: ha! ha!

“ *Jenny.* But you might have had a great deal
“ more, papa, if you would have been governed by
“ my mother.

“ *Sir Fran.* Daughter, he that is governed by his
“ wife has no wit at all.

“ *Jenny.* Then I hope I shall marry a fool, sir;
“ for I love to govern dearly.

“ *Sir Fran.* You are too pert, child, it don't do
“ well in a young woman.

“ *Lady Wrong.* Pray, sir Francis, don't snub her;
“ she has a fine growing spirit, and if you check her
“ so, you will make her as dull as her brother there.

“ *Squ. Rich.* [*After a long draught.*] Indeed, mo-
“ ther, I think my sister is too forward.

“ *Jenny.* You! you think I'm too forward! sure,

brother mud! your head's too heavy to think of any thing but your belly.

“ *Lady Wrong.* Well said, miss, he's none of your master, though he is your elder brother.

“ ‘*Squ. Rich.* No, nor she shawn't be my mistress, while's she's younger sister.

“ *Sir Fran.* Well said, Dick! shew 'em that stawt liquor makes a stawt heart, lad!

“ ‘*Squ. Rich.* So I will; and I'll drink ageen, for all her. [Drinks.]

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Sir Fran. So, John, how are the horses?

J. Moody. Troth, sir, I ha' noa good opinion o' this tawn, it's made up o' mischief, I think.

Sir Fran. What's the matter naw?

J. Moody. Why, I'll tell your worship—before we were gotten to th' street end, with the coach, here, a great luggerheaded cart, with wheels as thick as a brick-wall, laid hawld on't, and has poo'd it aw to bits; crack, went the perch! down goes the coach! and whang says the glasses, all to shievers! Marcy upon us! and this be London, would we were aw weel in the country ageen!

Jenny. What have you to do, to wish us all in the country again, Mr. Lubber? I hope we shall not go into the country again these seven years, mamma; let twenty coaches be pulled to pieces.

Sir Fran. Hold your tongue, Jenny!—Was Roger in no fault in all this?

J. Moody. Noa, sir, nor I, noather. Are not yow ashamed, says Roger to the carter, to do such an unkind thing by strangers? Noa, says he, you bumkin. Sir, he did the thing on very purpose; and so the folks said that stood by—Very well, says Roger, yow shall see what our meyster will say to ye! Your meyster! says he; your meyster may kiss my—and so he clapped his hand just there, and like your worship. Flesh! I thought they had better breeding in this town.

Sir Fran. I'll teach this rascal some, I'll warrant

him! Odsbud! if I take him in hand, I'll play the devil with him.

'*Squ. Rich.* Ay do, feyther; have him before the parliament.

Sir Fran. Odsbud! and so I will—I will make him know who I am! Where does he live?

J. Moody. I believe in London, sir.

Sir Fran. What's the rascal's name?

J. Moody. I think I heard somebody call him Dick.

'*Squ. Rich.* What, my name!

Sir Fran. Where did he go?

J. Moody. Sir, he went home.

Sir Fran. Where's that?

J. Moody. By my troth, sir, I doan't know! I heard him say he would cross the same street again to-morrow; and if we had a mind to stand in his way, he would pooll us over and over again.

Sir Fran. Will he so? Odzooks! get me a constable.

Lady Wrong. Pooh! get you a good supper. Come, Sir Francis, don't put yourself in a heat for what can't be help'd. Accidents will happen to people that travel abroad to see the world—For my part I think it's a mercy it was not overturned before we were all out on't.

Sir Fran. Why ay, that's true again, my dear.

Lady Wrong. Therefore see to-morrow if we can buy one at second-hand, for present use; so bespeak a new one, and then all's easy.

J. Moody. Why, troth, sir, I doan't think this could have held you above a day longer.

Sir Fran. D'ye think so, John?

J. Moody. Why you ha' had it ever since your worship were high sheriff.

Sir Fran. Why then go and see what Doll has got us for supper—and come and get off my boots.

[*Exit Sir Fran.*]

Lady Wrong. In the mean time, miss, do you step to Handy, and bid her get me some fresh night-clothes.

[*Exit Lady Wrong.*]

Jenny. Yes, mamma, and some for myself too.

[*Exit Jenny.*]

'Squ. Rich. Ods-flesh! and what mun I do all alone?
I'll e'en seek out where t'other pratty miss is,
And she and I'll go play at cards for kisses. [*Exit.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Lord TOWNLY's House. Enter Lord TOWNLY, a
Servant attending.

Lord Townly. Who's there?

Serv. My lord.

Lord T. Bid them get dinner—Lady Grace, your servant.

Enter Lady GRACE.

Lady G. What, is the house up already? My lady is not drest yet.

Lord T. No matter—it's three o'clock—she may break my rest, but she shall not alter my hours.

Lady G. Nay, you need not fear that now, for she dines abroad,

Lord T. That, I suppose is only an excuse for her not being ready yet,

Lady G. No, upon my word, she is engaged in company.

Lord T. Where, pray?

Lady G. At my Lady Revel's; and you know they never dine till supper-time.

Lord T. No, truly—she is one of those orderly ladies, who never let the sun shine upon any of their vices!—But prithee, sister, what humour is she in to-day?

Lady G. Oh, in tip-top spirits, I can assure you—she won a good deal last night.

Lord T. I know no difference between her winning or losing, while she continues her course of life.

Lady G. However, she is better in good humour than bad.

Lord T. Much alike: when she is in good humour,

other people only are the better for it; when in a very ill humour, then indeed I seldom fail to have my share of her.

Lady G. Well we won't talk of that now—Does any body dine here?

Lord T. Manly promised me—By the way, madam, what do you think of his last conversation?

Lady G. I am a little at a stand about it.

Lord T. How so?

Lady G. Why—I don't know how he can ever have any thoughts of me, that could lay down such severe rules upon wives in my hearing.

Lord T. Did you think his rules unreasonable?

Lady G. I can't say I did; but he might have had a little more complaisance before me, at least.

Lord T. Complaisance is only a proof of good breeding; but his plainness was a certain proof of his honesty; nay, of his good opinion of you; for he would never have opened himself so freely, but in confidence that your good sense would not be obliged at it.

Lady G. My good opinion of him, brother, has hitherto been guided by yours: but I have received a letter this morning, that shews him a very different man from what I thought him.

Lord T. A letter! from whom?

Lady G. That I don't know; but there it is.

[*Gives a letter.*]

Lord T. Pray, let's see [*Reads.*] 'The inclosed, madam, fell accidentally into my hands; if it no way concerns you, you will only have the trouble of reading this, from your sincere friend, and humble servant, Unknown, &c.'

Lady G. And this was the inclosed. [*Gives another.*]

Lord T. [*Reads.*]

'To Charles Manly Esq.'

'Your manner of living with me of late, convinces me that I now grow as painful to you as to myself: but however, though you can love me no longer, I hope you will not let me live worse than I did,

' before I left an honest income, for the vain hopes of
' being ever yours. - MYRTILLA DUPE.'

' P. S. 'Tis above four months since I received
' a shilling from you.'

Lady G. What think you now?

Lord T. I am considering——

Lady G. You see it's directed to him——

Lord T. That's true; but the postscript seems to be
a reproach that I think he is not capable of deserv-
ing.

Lady G. But who could have concern enough to
send it to me?

Lord T. I have observed that these sort of letters
from unknown friends generally come from secret
enemies.

Lady G. What would you have me do in it?

Lord T. What I think you ought to do—fairly shew
it to him, and say I advised you to it.

Lady G. Will not that have a very odd look from
me?

Lord T. Not at all, if you use my name in it; if he
is innocent, his impatience to appear so will discover
his regard to you. If he is guilty, it will be the best
way of preventing his addresses.

Lady G. But what pretence have I to put him out
of countenance?

Lord T. I can't think there's any fear of that.

Lady G. Pray, what is it you do think then?

Lord T. Why, certainly, that it's much more pro-
bable this letter may be all an artifice, than that he
is in the least concerned in it—

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Mr. Manly, my lord.

Lord T. Do you receive him, while I step a mi-
nute in to my lady. [*Exit Lord Townly.*

Enter MANLY.

Man. Madam, your most obedient; they told me
my lord was here.

Lady G. He will be here presently; he is but just
gone in to my sister.

Man. So, then my lady dines with us.

Lady G. No; she is engaged.

Man. I hope you are not of her party, madam.

Lady G. Not till after dinner.

Man. And, pray, how may she have disposed of the rest of the day?

Lady G. Much as usual; she has visits till about eight; after that, till court time, she is to be at quadrille, at Mrs. Idle's; after the drawing-room she takes a short supper with my lady Moonlight. And from thence they go together to my lord Noble's assembly.

Man. And are you to do all this with her, madam?

Lady G. Only a few of the visits: I would, indeed, have drawn her to the play; but I doubt we have so much upon our hands, that it will not be practicable.

Man. But how can you forbear all the rest of it?

Lady G. There's no great merit in forbearing what one is not charmed with.

Man. And yet I have found that very difficult in my time.

Lady G. How do you mean?

Man. Why, I have passed a great deal of my life in the hurry of the ladies, though I was generally better pleased when I was at quiet without them.

Lady G. What induced you then to be with them?

Man. Idleness, and the fashion.

Lady G. No mistresses in the case?

Man. To speak honestly,—yes—Being often in the toy-shop, there was no forbearing the baubles.

Lady G. And of course, I suppose, sometimes you were tempted to pay for them twice as much as they were worth.

“*Man.* Why, really, where fancy only makes the
“ choice, madam, no wonder if we are generally bub-
“ bled in those sort of bargains; which, I confess,
“ has been often my case: for I had constantly some
“ coquette or other upon my hands, whom I could

“ love, perhaps, just enough to put it in her power
“ to plague me.

“ *Lady G.* And that's a power, I doubt, commonly
“ made use of.

“ *Man.* The amours of a coquette, madam, seldom
“ have any other view; I look upon them and prudes
“ to be nuisances just alike, though they seem very
“ different: the first are always plaguing the men,
“ and the others are always abusing the women.

“ *Lady G.* And yet both of them do it for the
“ same vain ends; to establish a false character of
“ being virtuous.

“ *Man.* Of being chaste, they mean; for they know
“ no other virtue; and, upon the credit of that, they
“ traffic in every thing else that's vicious. They (even
“ against nature) keep their chastity, only because
“ they find they have more power to do mischief
“ with it, than they could possibly put in practice
“ without it.

“ *Lady G.* Hold, Mr. Manly: I am afraid this se-
“ vere opinion of the sex is owing to the ill choice
“ you have made of your mistresses.

“ *Man.* In a great measure it may be so; but ma-
“ dam, if both these characters are so odious, how
“ vastly valuable is that woman, who has attained all
“ they aim at, without the aid of the folly or vice
“ of either!

“ *Lady G.* I believe those sort of women to be as
“ scarce, sir, as the men that believe there are any
“ such; or that, allowing such, have virtue enough
“ to deserve them.

“ *Man.* That could deserve them, then——had
“ been a more favourable reflection.

Lady G. Nay, I speak only from my little expe-
rience; for (I'll be free with you, Mr. Manly) I don't
know a man in the world that, in appearance, might
better pretend to a woman of the first merit than your-
self: and yet I have a reason in my hand, here, to
think you have your failings.

Man. I have infinite, madam; but I am sure the

want of an implicit respect for you is not among the number—Pray, what is in your hand, madam?

Lady G. Nay, sir, I have no title to it, for the direction is to you. *[Gives him a letter.]*

Man. To me! I don't remember the hand.

[Reads to himself.]

Lady G. I can't perceive any change of guilt in him; and his surprise seems natural. *[Aside.]*—Give me leave to tell you one thing by the way, Mr. Manly; that I should never have shewn you this, but that my brother enjoined me to it.

Man. I take that to proceed from my lord's good opinion of me, madam.

Lady G. I hope, at least, it will stand as an excuse for my taking this liberty.

Man. I never yet saw you do any thing, madam, that wanted an excuse; and I hope you will not give me an instance to the contrary, by refusing the favour I am going to ask you.

Lady G. I don't believe I shall refuse any that you think proper to ask.

Man. Only this, madam, to indulge me so far as to let me know how this letter came into your hands.

Lady G. Inclosed to me in this, without a name.

Man. If there be no secret in the contents, madam—

Lady G. Why—there's an impertinent insinuation in it; but as I know your good sense will think it so too, I will venture to trust you.

Man. You'll obligè me, madam.

[He takes the other letter, and reads.]

Lady G. *[Aside.]* Now am I in the oddest situation; methinks our conversation grows terribly critical. This must produce something—Oh, lud! would it were over.

Man. Now, madam, I begin to have some light into the poor project that is at the bottom of all this.

Lady G. I have no notion of what could be proposed by it.

Man. A little patience, madam—First, as to the insinuation you mention—

Lady G. O! what is he going to say now? [*Aside.*]

Man. Though my intimacy with my lord may have allowed my visits to have been very frequent here of late; yet, in such a talking town as this you must not wonder if a great many of those visits are placed to your account: and this taken for granted, I suppose, has been told to my lady Wronghead, as a piece of news, since her arrival, not improbably with many more imaginary circumstances.

Lady G. My lady Wronghead!

Man. Ay, madam; for I am positive this is her hand.

Lady G. What view could she have in writing it?

Man. To interrupt any treaty of marriage she may have heard I am engaged in; because, if I die without heirs, her family expects that some part of my estate may return to them again. But I hope she is so far mistaken, that if this letter has given you the least uneasiness—I shall think that the happiest moment of my life.

Lady G. That does not carry your usual complaisance, Mr. Manly!

Man. Yes, madam, because I am sure I can convince you of my innocence.

Lady G. I am sure I have no right to enquire into it.

Man. Suppose you may not, madam; yet you may very innocently have so much curiosity.

Lady G. With what an artful gentleness he steals into my opinion! [*Aside.*] Well, sir, I won't pretend to have so little of the woman in me, as to want curiosity—But, pray, do you suppose, then, this Myrtilla is a real, or a fictitious name?

Man. Now I recollect, madam, there is a young woman in the house where my Lady Wronghead lodges, that I heard somebody call Myrtilla: this letter may be written by her—But how it came directed to me, I confess, is a mystery, that, before I ever presume to see your ladyship again, I think myself obliged in honour to find out. [*Going.*]

Lady G. Mr. Manly—you are not going?

Man. 'Tis but to the next street, madam; I shall be back in ten minutes.

Lady G. Nay, but dinner's just coming up.

Man. Madam, I can neither eat nor rest till I see an end of this affair.

Lady G. But this is so odd! why should any silly curiosity of mine drive you away?

Man. Since you won't suffer it to be yours, madam; then it shall be only to satisfy my own curiosity—

[*Exit Manly.*]

Lady G. Well—and now, what am I to think of all this? Or suppose an indifferent person had heard every word we have said to one another, what would they have thought on't? Would it have been very absurd to conclude, he is seriously inclined to pass the rest of his life with me?—I hope not—for I am sure the case is terribly clear on my side; and why may not I, without vanity, suppose my—unaccountable somewhat—has done as much execution upon him?—Why—because he never told me so—nay, he has not so much as mentioned the word love, or ever said one civil thing to my person—well—but he has said a thousand to my good opinion, and has certainly got it—had he spoke first to my person, he had paid a very ill compliment to my understanding—I should have thought him impertinent, and never have troubled my head about him; but as he has managed the matter, at least I am sure of one thing, that let his thoughts be what they will, I shall never trouble my head about any other man as long as I live.

Enter Mrs. TRUSTY.

Well, Mrs. Trusty, is my sister dressed yet?

Trusty. Yes, madam; but my lord has been courting her so, I think, till they are both out of humour.

Lady G. How so?

Trusty. Why, it began, madam, with his lordship's desiring her ladyship to dine at home to day—upon which my lady said she could not be ready; upon that my lord ordered them to stay the dinner; and then my lady ordered the coach: then my lord took

her short, and said he had ordered the coachman to set up; then my lady made him a great curtsey, and said she would wait till his lordship's horses had dined, and was mighty pleasant: but, for fear of the worst, madam, she whispered me—to get her chair ready.

[*Exit Trusty.*]

Lady G. Oh, here they come! and, by their looks, seem a little unfit for company. [*Exit Lady Grace.*]

Enter Lady TOWNLY, Lord TOWNLY following.

Lady T. Well, look you, my lord, I can bear it no longer; nothing still but about my faults, my faults: an agreeable subject, truly!

Lord T. Why, madam, if you won't hear of them, how can I ever hope to see you mend them?

Lady T. Why, I don't intend to mend them—I can't mend them—you know I have tried to do it a hundred times—and—it hurts me so—I can't bear it.

Lord T. And I, madam, can't bear this daily licentious abuse of your time and character.

Lady T. Abuse! astonishing! when the universe knows, I am never in better company than when I am doing what I have a mind to. But to see this world! that men can never get over that silly spirit of contradiction—Why, but last Thursday, now—there you wisely amended one of my faults, as you call them—you insisted upon my not going to the masquerade—and pray, what was the consequence? Was not I as cross as the devil all the night after? Was not I forced to get company at home? And was it not almost three o'clock in the morning before I was able to come to myself again? And then the fault is not mended neither—for next time I shall only have twice the inclination to go: so that all this mending, and mending, you see, is but darning an old ruffle, to make it worse than it was before.

Lord T. Well, the manner of women's living of late is insupportable; and one way or other—

Lady T. It's to be mended, I suppose: why, so it may: but then, my dear lord, you must give me time

—and when things are at worst, you know, they may mend themselves, ha, ha!

Lord T. Madam, I am not in a humour now to trifle.

Lady T. Why then, my lord, one word of fair argument—to talk with you in your own way, now—You complain of my late hours, and I of your early ones—so far we are even, you'll allow—but pray, which gives us the best figure in the eye of the polite world; my active, spirited three in the morning, or your dull, drowsy eleven at night! Now, I think, one has the air of a woman of quality, and t'other of a plodding mechanic, that goes to bed betimes, that he may rise early to open his shop—*Laugh!*

Lord T. Fie, fie, madam! is this your way of reasoning? 'tis time to wake you, then—'Tis not your ill hours alone that disturb me, but as often the ill company that occasions those ill hours.

Lady T. Sure I don't understand you now, my lord; what ill company do I keep?

Lord T. Why, at best, women that lose their money, and men that win it; or, perhaps, men that are voluntary bubbles at one game, in hopes a lady will give them fair play at another. Then, that unavoidable mixture with known rakes, concealed thieves, and sharpers in embroidery—or, what to me is still more shocking, that herd of familiar, chattering, crepeared coxcombs, who are so often like monkeys, there would be no knowing them asunder, but that their tails hang from their heads, and the monkey's grows where it should do.

Lady T. And a husband must give eminent proof of his sense, that thinks their powder-puffs dangerous.

Lord T. Their being fools, madam, is not always the husband's security; or, if it were, fortune sometimes gives them advantages that might make a thinking woman tremble.

Lady T. What do you mean?

Lord T. That women sometimes lose more than

they are able to pay; and if a creditor be a little pressing, the lady may be reduced to try, if, instead of gold, the gentleman will accept of a trinket.

Lady T. My lord, you grow scurrilous; you'll make me hate you. I'll have you to know, I keep company with the politest people in town, and the assemblies I frequent are full of such.

Lord T. So are the churches—now and then.

Lady T. My friends frequent them too, as well as the assemblies.

Lord T. Yes, and would do it oftener, if a groom of the chambers were there allowed to furnish cards to the company.

Lady T. I see what you drive at all this while: you would lay an imputation on my fame, to cover your own avarice. I might take any pleasures, I find, that were not expensive.

Lord T. Have a care, madam; don't let me think you only value your chastity to make me reproachable for not indulging you in every thing else that's vicious—I, madam, have a reputation, too, to guard, that's dear to me as yours—The follies of an ungoverned wife may make the wisest man uneasy; but 'tis his own fault, if ever they make him contemptible.

Lady T. My lord—you would make a woman mad!

Lord T. You'd make a man a fool.

Lady T. If Heaven has made you otherwise, that won't be in my power.

Lord T. Whatever may be in your inclination, madam, I'll prevent your making me a beggar, at least.

Lady T. A beggar! Cræsus! I'm out of patience!—I won't come home till four to-morrow morning.

Lord T. That may be, madam; but I'll order the doors to be locked at twelve.

Lady T. Then I won't come home till to-morrow night.

Lord T. Then, madam, you shall never come home again. *[Exit Lord Townly.]*

Lady T. What does he mean? I never heard such a word from him in my life before? The man always

used to have manners in his worst humours. There's something, that I don't see, at the bottom of all this—But his head's always upon some impracticable scheme or other; so I won't trouble mine any longer about him. Mr. Manly, your servant.

Enter MANLY.

Man. I ask pardon for intrusion, madam; but I hope my business with my lord will excuse it.

Lady T. I believe you'll find him in the next room, sir.

Man. Will you give me leave, madam?

Lady T. Sir—you have my leave, though you were a lady.

Man. [*Aside.*] What a well-bred age do we live in!

[*Exit Manly.*]

Enter Lady GRACE.

Lady T. Oh, my dear Lady Grace! how could you leave me so unmercifully alone all this while?

Lady G. I thought my lord had been with you.

Lady T. Why, yes—and therefore I wanted your relief; for he has been in such a flutter here—

Lady G. Bless me! for what?

Lady T. Only our usual breakfast; we have each of us had our dish of matrimonial comfort this morning—We have been charming company.

Lady G. I am mighty glad of it: sure it must be a vast happiness, when a man and wife can give themselves the same turn of conversation!

Lady T. Oh, the prettiest thing in the world!

Lady G. Now I should be afraid, that where two people are every day together so, they must often be in want of something to talk upon.

Lady T. Oh, my dear, you are the most mistaken in the world! married people have things to talk of, child, that never enter into the imagination of others.—Why, here's my lord and I, now, we have not been married above two short years, you know, and we have already eight or ten things constantly in bank, that, whenever we want company, we can take up any one of them for two hours together, and the subject

never the flatter; nay, if we have occasion for it, it will be as fresh the next day, too, as it was the first hour it entertained us.

Lady G. Certainly that must be vastly pretty.

Lady T. Oh, there's no life like it! Why, t'other day, for example, when you dined abroad, my lord and I, after a pretty cheerful *tête à tête* meal, sat us down by the fire-side in an easy, indolent, pick-tooth way, for about a quarter of an hour, as if we had not thought of any other's being in the room—At last, stretching himself, and yawning—My dear—says he—aw—you came home very late last night—'Twas but just turned of two, says I—I was in bed—aw—by eleven—says he—So you are every night, says I—Well, says he, I am amazed you can sit up so late—How can you be amazed, says I, at a thing that happens so often?—Upon which we entered into a conversation—and though this is a point has entertained above fifty times already, we always find so many pretty new things to say upon it, that I believe in my soul it will last as long as we live.

Lady G. But pray, in such sort of family dialogues, (though extremely well for passing the time) don't there, now and then, enter some little witty sort of bitterness?

Lady T. Oh, yes! which does not do amiss at all. A smart repartee, with a zest of recrimination at the head of it, makes the prettiest sherbet. Ay, ay, if we did not mix a little of the acid with it, a matrimonial society would be so luscious, that nothing but an old liquorish prude would be able to bear it.

Lady G. Well—certainly you have the most elegant taste—

Lady T. Though to tell you the truth, my dear, I rather think we squeezed a little too much lemon into it, this bout; for it grew so sour at last, that—I think—I almost told him he was a fool—and he, again—talked something oddly—of turning me out of doors.

Lady G. Oh, have a care of that!

Lady T. Nay, if he should, I may thank my own wise father for that—

Lady G. How so?

Lady T. Why—when my good lord first opened his honourable trenches before me, my unaccountable papa, in whose hands I then was, gave me up at discretion.

Lady G. How do you mean?

Lady T. He said, the wives of this age were come to that pass, that he would not desire even his own daughter should be trusted with pin-money; so that my whole train of separate inclinations are left entirely at the mercy of a husband's odd humours.

Lady G. Why, that, indeed, is enough to make a woman of spirit look about her.

Lady T. Nay, but to be serious, my dear; what would you really have a woman do, in my case?

Lady G. Why—if I had a sober husband, as you have, I would make myself the happiest wife in the world, by being as sober as he.

Lady T. Oh, you wicked thing! how can you tease one at this rate, when you know he is so very sober, that (except giving me money) there is not one thing in the world he can do to please me. And I, at the same time, partly by nature, and partly, perhaps, by keeping the best company, do, with my soul, love almost every thing he hates. I dote upon assemblies; my heart bounds at a ball; and at an opera—I expire. Then I love play to distraction; cards enchant me—and dice—put me out of my little wits—Dear, dear hazard!—Oh, what a flow of spirits it gives one!—Do you never play at hazard, child?

Lady G. Oh, never! I don't think it sits well upon women; there's something so masculine, so much the air of a rake in it. You see how it makes the men swear and curse; and when a woman is thrown into the same passion—why—

Lady T. That's very true; one is a little put to it, sometimes, not to make use of the same words to express it.

Lady G. Well, and, upon ill luck, pray what words are you really forced to make use of?

Lady T. Why, upon a very hard case, indeed, when a sad wrong word is rising, just to one's tongue's end, I give a great gulp—and swallow it.

Lady G. Well—and is not that enough to make you forswear play as long as you live?

Lady T. Oh, yes: I have forsworn it.

Lady G. Seriously?

Lady T. Solemnly! a thousand times; but then one is constantly forsworn.

Lady G. And how can you answer that?

Lady T. My dear, what we say when we are losers, we look upon to be no more binding than a lover's oath, or a great man's promise. But I beg pardon, child; I should not lead you so far into the world; you are a prude, and design to live soberly.

Lady G. Why, I confess, my nature and my education do, in a good degree, incline me that way.

Lady T. Well, how a woman of spirit (for you don't want that, child,) can dream of living soberly, is to me inconceivable; for you will marry, I suppose.

Lady G. I can't tell but I may.

Lady T. And won't you live in town?

Lady G. Half the year, I should like it very well.

Lady T. My stars! and you would really live in London half the year to be sober in it?

Lady G. Why not?

Lady T. Why can't you as well go and be sober in the country?

Lady G. So I would—t'other half year.

Lady T. And pray, what comfortable scheme of life would you form, now, for your summer and winter sober entertainments?

Lady G. A scheme that I think might very well content us.

Lady T. Oh, of all things, let's hear it.

Lady G. Why, in summer, I could pass my leisure hours in riding, in reading, walking by a canal, or

sitting at the end of it under a great tree; in dressing, dining, chatting with an agreeable friend; perhaps, hearing a little music, taking a dish of tea, or a game of cards, soberly; managing my family, looking into its accounts, playing with my children, if I had any, or in a thousand other innocent amusements—soberly; and possibly, by these means, I might induce my husband to be as sober as myself—

Lady T. Well, my dear, thou art an astonishing creature! For sure such primitive antediluvian notions of life have not been in any head these thousand years—Under a great tree! Oh, my soul!—But I beg we may have the sober town-scheme too—for I am charmed with the country one!—

Lady G. You shall, and I'll try to stick to my sobriety there too.

Lady T. Well, though I'm sure it will give me the vapours, I must hear it however.

Lady G. Why then, for fear of your fainting, madam, I will first so far come into the fashion, that I would never be dressed out of it—but still it should be soberly: for I can't think it any disgrace to a woman of my private fortune, not to wear her lace as fine as the wedding-suit of a first duchess. Though there is one extravagance I would venture to come up to.

Lady T. Aye, now for it—

Lady G. I would every day be as clean as a bride.

Lady T. Why, the men say, that's a great step to be made one—Well, now you are drest—Pray let's see to what purpose?

Lady G. I would visit—that is, my real friends; but as little for form as possible.—I would go to court; sometimes to an assembly, nay, play at quadrille—soberly: I would see all the good plays; and, because 'tis the fashion, now and then an opera—but I would not expire there, for fear I should never go again: and, lastly, I can't say, but for curiosity, if I liked my company, I might be drawn in once to a masquerade; and this, I think, is as far as any woman can go—soberly.

Lady T. Well if it had not been for that last piece of sobriety, I was just going to call for some surfeit-water.

Lady G. Why, don't you think, with the farther aid of breakfasting, dining, and taking the air, supping, sleeping, not to say a word of devotion, the four and twenty hours might roll over in a tolerable manner?

Lady T. Tolerable! Deplorable! Why, child all you purpose is but to endure life now I want to enjoy it—

Enter Mrs. TRUSTY.

Trust. Madam your ladyship's chair is ready.

Lady T. Have the footmen their white flambeaux yet? For last night I was poisoned.

Trust. Yes, madam; there were some come in this morning. *[Exit Trusty.]*

Lady T. My dear, you will excuse me; but you know my time is so precious—

Lady G. That I beg I may not hinder your least enjoyment of it.

Lady T. You will call on me at lady Revel's?

Lady G. Certainly.

Lady T. But I am so afraid it will break into your scheme, my dear.

Lady G. When it does, I will—soberly break from you.

Lady T. Why then, 'till we meet again, dear sister, I wish you all tolerable happiness.

[Exit Lady T.]

Lady G. There she goes—Dash! into her stream of pleasures! Poor woman, she is really a fine creature; and sometimes infinitely agreeable; nay, take her out of the madness of this town, rational in her notions and easy to live with: but she is so borne down by this torrent of vanity in vogue, she thinks every hour of her life is lost that she does not lead at the head of it. What it will end in, I tremble to imagine!—Ha, my brother, and Manly with him! I guess what they have been talking of—I shall hear

it in my turn, I suppose, but it won't become me to be inquisitive.

[*Exit Lady Grace.*]

Enter Lord TOWNLY and MANLY.

Lord T. I did not think my Lady Wronghead had such a notable brain: though I can't say she was so very wise, in trusting this silly girl, you call Myrtilla, with the secret.

Man. No, my lord, you mistake me; had the girl been in the secret, perhaps I had never come at it myself.

Lord T. Why, I thought you said the girl writ this letter to you, and that my Lady Wronghead sent it inclosed to my sister?

Man. If you please to give me leave, my lord—the fact is thus—This inclosed letter to Lady Grace was a real original one, written by this girl, to the count we have been talking of: the count drops it, and my Lady Wronghead finds it: then only changing the cover, she seals it up as a letter of business, just written by herself, to me; and pretending to be in a hurry, gets this innocent girl to write the direction for her.

Lord T. Oh, then the girl did not know she was superscribing a billet-doux of her own to you?

Man. No, my lord; for when I first questioned her about the direction, she owned it immediately: but when I shewed her that her letter to the count was within it, and told her how it came into my hands, the poor creature was amazed, and thought herself betrayed both by the count and my lady—in short, upon this discovery, the girl and I grew so gracious, that she has let me into some transactions, in my Lady Wronghead's family, which, with my having a careful eye over them, may prevent the ruin of it.

Lord T. You are very generous, to be solicitous for a lady that has given you so much uneasiness.

Man. But I will be most unmercifully revenged of her: for I will do her the greatest friendship in the world—against her will.

Lord T. What an uncommon philosophy art thou master of, to make even thy malice a virtue!

Man. Yet, my lord, I assure you, there is no one action of my life gives me more pleasure than your approbation of it.

Lord T. Dear Charles! my heart's impatient 'till thou art nearer to me: and, as a proof that I have long wished thee so, while your daily conduct has chosen rather to deserve than ask my sister's favour, I have been as secretly industrious to make her sensible of your merit: and since on this occasion you have opened your whole heart to me, 'tis now with equal pleasure I assure you we have both succeeded—she is as firmly yours—

Man. Impossible! you flatter me!

Lord T. I'm glad you think it flattery: but she herself shall prove it none: she dines with us alone: when the servants are withdrawn, I'll open a conversation, that shall excuse my leaving you together—Oh, Charles! had I, like thee, been cautious in my choice, what melancholy hours had this heart avoided.

Man. No more of that, I beg my lord—

Lord T. But 'twill, at least, be some relief to my anxiety, however barren of content the state has been to me, to see so near a friend and sister happy in it. Your harmony of life will be an instance how much the choice of temper is preferable to beauty.

*While your soft hours in mutual kindness move,
You'll reach by virtue what I lost by love.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Mrs. MOTHERLY's House. Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY, meeting MYRTILLA.

Motherly. So, niece! where is it possible you can have been these six hours?

Myr. Oh, madam, I have such a terrible story to tell you!

Moth. A story! Ods my life! What have you done with the count's note of five hundred pounds I sent you about? Is it safe? Is it good? Is it security?

Myr. Yes, yes, it is safe: but for its goodness— Mercy on us! I have been in a fair way to be hanged about it!

Moth. The dickens! has the rogue of a count played us another trick, then?

Myr. You shall hear, madam: when I came to Mr. Cash, the banker's, and shewed him his note for five hundred pounds, payable to the count, or order, in two months—he looked earnestly upon it, and desired me to step into the inner room, while he examined his books—after I had stayed about ten minutes, he came in to me—claps the door, and charges me with a constable for forgery.

Moth. Ah, poor soul! and how didst thou get off?

Myr. While I was ready to sink in this condition, I begged him to have a little patience, 'till I could send for Mr. Manly, whom he knew to be a gentleman of worth and honour, and who, I was sure, would convince him whatever fraud might be in the note, that I was myself an innocent abused woman—and, as, good luck would have it, in less than half an hour Mr. Manly came—so, without mincing the matter, I fairly told him upon what design the count had lodged that note in your hands, and, in short, laid open the whole scheme he had drawn us into to make our fortune.

Moth. The devil you did!

Myr. Why, how do you think it was possible I could any otherwise make Mr. Manly my friend, to help me out of the scrape I was in? To conclude, he soon made Mr. Cash easy, and sent away the constable: nay, farther, he promised me, if I would trust the note in his hands, he would take care it should be fully paid before it was due, and at the same time would give me an ample revenge upon the count; so that all you have to consider now, madam, is whe-

ther you think yourself safer in the count's hands, or Mr. Manly's.

Moth. Nay, nay, child; there is no choice in the matter! Mr Manly may be a friend indeed, if any thing in our power can make him so.

Myr. Well, 'madam; and now, pray, how stand matters at home here? What has the count done with the ladies?

Moth. Why, every thing he has a mind to do, by this time, I suppose. He is in as high favour with miss, as he is with my lady.

Myr. Pray, where are the ladies?

Moth. Ratling abroad in their own coach, and the well-bred count along with them: they have been scouring all the shops in the town over, buying fine things and new clothes from morning to night: they have made one voyage already, and have brought home such a cargo of hawbles and trumpery—Mercy on the poor man that's to pay for them!

Myr. Did not the young 'squire go with them?

Moth. No, no; Miss said, truly he would but disgrace their party: so they even left him asleep by the kitchen fire.

Myr. Has not he ask'd after me all this while? For I had a sort of an assignation with him.

Moth. Oh, yes, he has been in a bitter taking about it. At last his disappointment grew so uneasy, that he fairly fell a crying; so to quiet him, I sent one of the maids and John Moody abroad with him to shew him—the lions, and the monument. Ods me! there he is just come home again—You may have business with him—so I'll even turn you together. [*Exit.*

Enter 'Squire RICHARD.

'*Squ. Rich.* Soah, soah, Mrs. Myrtila, where han yaw been aw this day, forsooth?

Myr. Nay, if you go to that, 'squire, where have you been, pray?

'*Squ. Rich.* Why, when I fun' at yow were no loikly to come whoam, I were ready to hong my sel—so John Moody, and I, and one o' your lasses,

have been—Lord knows where—a seeing o' the soights.

Myr. Well, and pray what have you seen, sir?

'Squ. Rich. Flesh! I cawnt tell, not I—seen every thing, I think. First, there we went o' top o' the what d'ye call it? there, the great huge stone post, up the rawnd and rawnd stairs, that twine and twine about just an as thof it was a cork-screw.

Myr. Oh, the monument; well, and was it not a fine sight from the top.

'Squ. Rich. Sight, miss! I know no'—I saw nought but smoke and brick housen, and steuple tops—then there was such a mortal ting-tang of bells, and rumbling of carts and coaches; and then the folks under one looked so small, and made such a hum and buz, it put me in mind of my mother's great glass bee-hive in our garden in the country.

Myr. I think, master, you give a very good account of it.

'Squ. Rich. Ay, but I did not like it: for my head—my head—began to turn—so I trundled me down stairs agen like a round-trencher.

Myr. Well, but this was not all you saw, I suppose?

'Squ. Rich. Noa, noa, we went after that, and saw the lions, and I liked them better by hawlf; they are pure grim devils; hoh, hoh! I touke a stick, and gave one of them such a poke o' the noase—I believe he would ha' snapt my head off, an' he could have got me. Hoh! hoh! hoh!

Myr. Well, master, when you and I go abroad, I'll shew you prettier sights than these—there's a masquerade to-morrow.

'Squ. Rich. Oh, laud, ay! they say that's a pure thing for Merry Andrews, and those sort of comical munimers—and the count tells me, that there lads and lasses may jig their tails, and eat, and drink, without grudging, all night long.

Myr. What would you say now, if I should get you a ticket, and go along with you?

'Squ. Rich. Ah, dear!

Myr. But have a care, 'squire, the fine ladies there are terribly tempting; look well to your heart, or, ads me! they'll whip it up in the trip of a minute.

'Squ. Rich. Ay, but they cawnt thoa—soa let 'um look to themselves, an' ony of 'um falls in love with me—mayhap they had as good be quiet.

Myr. Why sure you would not refuse a fine lady, would you?

Squ. Rich. Ay, but I would though, unless it were—one as I know of.

Myr. Oh, oh, then you have left your heart in the country, I find?

'Squ. Rich. Noa, noa, my heart—ch—my heart e'nt awt o' this room.

Myr. I am glad you have it about you, however.

'Squ. Rich. Nay, mayhap, not soa noather, somebody else may have it, 'at you little think of.

Myr. I can't imagine what you mean!

'Squ. Rich. Noa! why doan't you know how many folks there is in this rooin, naw?

Myr. Very fine, master, I see you have learnt the town gallantry already.

Squ. Rich. Why, doan't you believe 'at I have a kindness for you then?

Myr. Fy, fy, master, how you talk; beside, you are too young to think of a wife.

'Squ. Rich. Ay! but I caunt help thinking o' yow, for all that.

Myr. How! why sure, sir, you don't pretend to think of me in a dishonourable way?

'Squ. Rich. Nay, that's as you see good—I did no' think 'at you would ha' thowght of me for a husband, mayhap; unless I had means in my own hands; and feyther allows me but haulf a crown a week, as yet awhile.

Myr. Oh, when I like any body, 'tis not want of money will make me refuse them.

'Squ. Rich. Well, that's just my mind now: for an' I like a girl, miss, I would take her in her smock.

Myr. Ay, master, now you speak like a man of honour; this shews something of a true heart in you.

'Squ. Rich. Ay, and a true heart you'll find me; try when you will.

Myr. Hush, hush, here's your papa come home, and my aunt with him.

'Squ. Rich. A devil rive 'em, what do they come naw for?

Myr. When you and I get to the masquerade, you shall see what I'll say to you.

'Squ. Rich. Well, hands upon't, then—

Myr. There—

'Squ. Rich. One buss, and a bargain. [*Kisses her.*]

Ads. wauntlikins! as soft and plump as a marrow-pudding. [*Exeunt severally.*]

Enter Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD and Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Sir Fran. What! my wife and daughter abroad, say you?

Moth. Oh, dear sir, they have been mighty busy all the day long; they just came home to snap up a short dinner, and so went out again.

Sir Fran. Well, well, I shan't stay supper for 'em, I can tell 'em that; for od's heart, I have nothing in me, but a toast and tankard, since morning.

Moth. I am afraid, sir, these late parliament hours won't agree with you.

Sir Fran. Why, truly, Mrs. Motherly, they don't do right with us country gentlemen; to lose one meal out of three, is a hard tax upon a good stomach.

Moth. It is so indeed, sir.

Sir Fran. But howsomever, Mrs. Motherly, when we consider, that what we suffer is for the good of our country—

Moth. Why truly, sir, that is something.

Sir Fran. Oh, there's a great deal to be said for't—the good of one's country is above all things—A true-hearted Englishman thinks nothing too much for it—I have heard of some honest gentlemen so very

zealous, that for the good of their country—they would sometimes go to dinner at midnight.

Moth. Oh, that goodness of 'em! sure their country must have a vast esteem for them?

Sir Fran. So they have, Mrs. Motherly; they are so respected when they come home to their boroughs after a session, and so beloved—that their country will come and dine with them every day in the week.

Moth. Dear me! What a fine thing 'tis to be so populous!

Sir Fran. It is a great comfort, indeed! and, I can assure you, you are a good sensible woman, Mrs. Motherly.

Moth. Oh, dear sir, your honour's pleased to compliment.

Sir Fran. No, no, I see you know how to value people of consequence.

Moth. Good lack! here's company, sir; will you give me leave to get you a little something 'till the ladies come home, sir?

Sir Fran. Why, troth, I don't think it would be amiss.

Moth. It shall be done in a moment, sir. [*Exit.*]

Enter MANLY.

Man. Sir Francis, your servant.

Sir Fran. Cousin Manly.

Man. I am come to see how the family goes on here,

Sir Fran. Troth! all as busy as bees; I have been upon the wing ever since eight o'clock this morning.

Man. By your early hour, then, I suppose you have been making your court to some of the great men.

Sir Fran. Why, faith! you have hit it, sir—I was advised to lose no time; so I e'en went straight forward to one great man I had never seen in all my life before.

Man. Right, that was doing business: but who had you got to introduce you?

Sir Fran. Why, nobody—I remember I had heard

a wise man say—My son, be bold—so troth! I introduced myself.

Man. As how, pray?

Sir Fran. Why, thus—Look ye—Please your lordship, says I, I am Sir Francis Wronghead, of Bumper-hall, and member of parliament for the borough of Guzzledown—Sir, your humble servant, says my lord; thof I have not the honour to know your person, I have heard you are a very honest gentleman, and I am glad your borough has made choice of so worthy a representative; and so, says he, Sir Francis, have you any service to command me? Naw, cousin, those last words, you may be sure gave me no small encouragement. And thof I know, sir, you have no extraordinary opinion of my parts, yet I believe, you won't say I missed it naw!

Man. Well, I hope I shall have no cause.

Sir Fran. So, when I found him so courteous—My lord, says I, I did not think to ha' troubled your lordship with business upon my first visit: but, since your lordship is pleased not to stand upon ceremony, —why truly, says I, I think naw is as good as another time.

Man. Right! there you pushed him home.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, I had a mind to let him see that I was none of your mealy-mouthed ones.

Man. Very good.

Sir Fran. So, in short, my lord, says I, I have a good estate—but—a—it's a little awt at elbows: and as I desire to serve my king as well as my country, I shall be very willing to accept of a place at court.

Man. So this was making short work on't.

Sir Fran. I'cod! I shot him flying, cousin: some of your hawf-witted ones, naw, would ha' hummed and hawed, and dangled a month or two after him, before they durst open their mouths about a place, and, mayhap, not ha' got it at last neither.

Man. Oh, I'm glad you're so sure on't—

Sir Fran. You shall hear, cousin—Sir Francis says my lord, pray what sort of a place may you ha

turned your thoughts upon? My lord, says I, beggars must not be chusers; but ony place, says I, about a thousand a-year, will be well enough to be doing with, till something better falls in—for I thought it would not look well to stond haggling with him at first.

Man. No, no, your business was to get footing any way.

Sir Fran. Right! ay, there's it! ay cousin, I see you know the world.

Man. Yes, yes, one sees more of it every day—Well, but what said my lord to all this?

Sir Fran. Sir Francis, says he, I shall be glad to serve you any way that lies in my power; so he gave me a squeeze by the hand, as much as to say, give yourself no trouble—I'll do your business; with that he turned himself abawt to somebody with a coloured ribbon across here, that looked, in my thoughts, as if he came for a place too.

Man. Ha! so, upon these hopes, you are to make your fortune!

Sir Fran. Why, do you think there's any doubt of it, sir?

Man. Oh, no, I have not the least doubt about it—for just as you have done, I made my fortune ten years ago.

Sir Fran. Why, I never knew you had a place, cousin.

Man. Nor I neither, upon my faith, cousin. But you, perhaps, may have better fortune: for I suppose my lord has heard of what importance you were in the debate to-day—You have been since down at the house, I presume.

Sir Fran. Oh, yes! I would not neglect the house for ever so much.

Man. Well, and pray what have they done there?

Sir Fran. Why, troth! I can't well tell you what they have done; but I can tell you what I did, and I think pretty well in the main, only I happened to make a little mistake at last, indeed.

Man. How was that?

Sir Fran. Why, they were all got there into a sort of a puzzling debate about the good of the nation—and I were always for that, you know—but, in short, the arguments were so long-winded o' both sides, that waunds! I did not well understand 'um: hawsomever I was convinced, and so resolved to vote right, according to my conscience—so when they came to put the question, as they call it,—I don't know how 'twas—but I doubt I cried ay! when I should ha' cried no!

Man. How came that about?

Sir Fran. Why, by a mistake, as I tell you—for there was a good-humoured sort of a gentleman, one Mr. Totherside, I think they call him, that sat next me, as soon as I had cried ay! gives me a hearty shake by the hand. Sir, says he, you are a man of honour, and a true Englishman; and I should be proud to be better acquainted with you—and so, with that he takes me by the sleeve, along with the crowd into the lobby—so I knew nowght—but, ods-flesh! I was got o' the wrung side the post—for I were told, afterwards, I should have staid where I was.

Man. And so, if you had not quite made your fortune before, you have clinched it now!—Ah, thou head of the Wrongheads! [*Aside.*]

Sir Fran. Odso! here's my lady come home at last—I hope, cousin, you will be so kind as to take a family supper with us?

Man. Another time, sir Francis; but to-night I am engaged.

Enter Lady WRONGHEAD, Miss JENNY, and Count BASSET.

Lady Wrong. Cousin, your servant; I hope you will pardon my rudeness; but we have really been in such a continual hurry here, that we have not had a leisure moment to return your last visit.

Man. Oh, madam, I am a man of no ceremony; you see that has not hindered my coming again.

Lady Wrong. You are infinitely obliging; but I'll redeem my credit with you.

Man. At your own time, madam.

Count Bas. I must say that for Mr. Manly, madam, if making people easy is the rule of good-breeding, he is certainly the best-bred man in the world.

Man. Soh! I am not to drop my acquaintance, I find—[*Aside.*] I am afraid, sir, I shall grow vain upon your good opinion.

Count Bas. I don't know that, sir; but I am sure what you are pleased to say makes me so.

Man. The most impudent modesty that ever I met with.

Lady Wrong. Lard! how ready his wit is. [*Aside.*]

Sir Fran. Don't you think, sir, the count's a very fine gentleman? [*Apart.*]

Man. Oh, among the ladies, certainly. [*Apart.*]

Sir Fran. And yet he's as stout as a lion. Waund, he'll storm any thing. [*Apart.*]

Man. Will he so? Why then, sir, take care of your citadel. [*Apart.*]

Sir Fran. Ah, you are a wag, cousin. [*Apart.*]

Man. I hope, ladies, the town air continues to agree with you.

Jenny. Oh, perfectly well, sir! We have been abroad in our new coach all day long—and we have bought an ocean of fine things. And to-morrow we go to the masquerade; and on Friday to the play; and on Saturday to the opera; and on Sunday we are to be at the what-d'ye you call it—assembly, and see the ladies play at quadrille, and piquet, and ombre, and hazard, and basset; and on Monday we are to see the king, and so on Tuesday—

Lady Wrong. Hold, hold, miss! you must not let your tongue run so fast, child—you forget; you know I brought you hither to learn modesty.

Man. Yes, yes! and she is improved with a vengeance— [*Aside.*]

Jenny. Lawrd! mamma, I am sure I did not say any harm; and if one must not speak in one's turn,

one may be kept under as long as one lives, for aught I see.

Lady Wrong. O' my conscience, this girl grows so headstrong—

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, there's your fine growing spirit for you! now tack it dawn an' you can.

Jenny. All I said, papa, was only to entertain my cousin Manly.

Man. My pretty dear, I ain mightily obliged to you.

Jenny. Look you there now, madam.

Lady Wrong. Hold your tongue, I say.

Jenny. [Turning away and glowing.] I declare it, I won't bear it: she is always snubbing me before you, sir!—I know why she does it, well enough—

[*Aside to the Count.*

Count Bas. Hush, hush, my dear! don't be uneasy at that; she'll suspect us.

[*Aside.*

Jenny. Let her suspect, what do I care—I don't know but I have as much reason to suspect as she—though perhaps I am not so afraid of her.

Count Bas. [*Aside*] I gad, if I don't keep a tight hand on my tit, here, she'll run away with my project before I can bring it to bear.

Lady Wrong. [*Aside.*] Perpetually hanging upon him! The young harlot is certainly in love with him; but I must not let them see I think so—and yet I can't bear it. Upon my life, count, you'll spoil that forward girl—you should not encourage her so.

Count Bas. Pardon me, madam, I was only advising her to observe what your ladyship said to her.

Man. Yes, truly, her observations have been something particular.

[*Aside.*

Count Bas. In one word, madam, she has a jealousy of your ladyship, and I am forced to encourage her to blind it; 'twill be better to take no notice of her behaviour to me.

[*Apart.*

Lady Wrong. You are right, I will be more cautious.

[*Apart.*

Count Bas. To-morrow, at the masquerade, we may lose her. [*Apart.*]

Lady Wrong. We shall be observed; I'll send you a note, and settle that affair—go on with the girl, and don't mind me. [*Apart.*]

Count Bas. I have been taking your part, my little angel.

Lady Wrong. Jenny! come hither, child—you must not be so hasty, my dear—I only advise you for your good.

Jenny. Yes, mamma; but when I am told of a thing before company, it always makes me worse, you know.

Man. If I have any skill in the fair sex, miss and her mamma have only quarrelled because they are both of a mind. This facetious count seems to have made a very genteel step into the family. [*Aside.*]

Enter MYRTILLA. *MANLY* talks apart with her.

Lady Wrong. Well, sir Francis, and what news have you brought us from Westminster to-day?

Sir Fran. News, madam! I'cod! I have some—and such as does not come every day, I can tell you—a word in your ear—I have got a promise of a place at court of a thousand pawnd a-year already.

Lady Wrong. Have you so, sir? And pray who may you thank for't? Now, who is in the right? Is not this better than throwing so much away after a stinking pack of fox-hounds in the country? Now your family may be the better for it.

Sir Fran. Nay, that's what persuaded me to come up, my dove.

Lady Wrong. Mighty well—come—let me have another hundred pound then.

Sir Fran. Another, child? Waunds! you have had one hundred this morning, pray what's become of that, my dear?

Lady Wrong. What's become of it? Why I'll shew you, my love! Jenny, have you the bills about you.

Jenny. Yes, inamma.

Lady Wrong. What's become of it? Why laid out, my dear, with fifty more to it, that I was forced to borrow of the count here.

Jenny. Yes, indeed, papa, and that would hardly do neither—There's the account.

Sir Fran. [*Turning over the bills.*] Let's see! let's see! what the devil have we got here?

Man. Then you have sounded your aunt, you say, and she readily comes into all I proposed to you.

Myr. Sir, I'll answer, with my life, she is most thankfully yours in every article. She mightily desires to see you, sir. [*Apart.*]

Man. I am going home, directly; bring her to my house in half an hour; and if she makes good what you tell me, you shall both find your account in it.

Myr. Sir, she shall not fail you. [*Apart.*]

Sir Fran. Od's-life! madam, here's nothing but toys and trinkets, and fans, and clock stockings, by wholesale.

Lady Wrong. There's nothing but what's proper, and for your credit, Sir Francis—Nay, you see I am so good a housewife, that in necessities for myself I have scarce laid out a shilling.

Sir Fran. No, by my troth, so it seems; for the devil o' one thing's here that I can see you have any occasion for.

Lady Wrong. My dear, do you think I came hither to live out of the fashion? why, the greatest distinction of a fine lady in this town is in the variety of pretty things that she has no occasion for.

Jenny. Sure, papa, could you imagine, that women of quality wanted nothing but stays and petticoats?

Lady Wrong. Now, that is so like him!

Man. So the family comes on finely. [*Aside.*]

Lady Wrong. Lard, if men were always to govern, what dowdies they would reduce their wives to!

Sir Fran. An hundred pound in the morning, and

want another afore night! Waunds and fire! the lord mayor of London could not hold at this rate!

Man. Oh, do you feel it, sir? [*Aside.*

Lady Wrong. My dear, you seem uneasy; let me have the hundred pound, and compose yourself.

Sir Fran. Compose the devil, madam! why do you consider what a hundred pounds a day comes to in a year?

Lady Wrong. My life, if I account with you from one day to another, that's really all my head is able to bear at a time—But I'll tell you what I consider—I consider that my advice has got you a thousand pound a year this morning—That now, methinks, you might consider, sir.

Sir Fran. A thousand a-year! Waunds, madam, but I have not touch'd a penny of it yet!

Man. Nor ever will, I'll answer for him. [*Aside.*

Enter 'Squire RICHARD.

'Squ. Rich. Feyther, an you doan't come quickly, the meat will be coaled: and I'd fain pick a bit with you.

Lady Wrong. Bless me, sir Francis! you are not going to sup by yourself.

Sir Fran. No, but I'm going to dine by myself, and that's pretty near the matter, madam.

Lady Wrong. Had not you as good stay a little, my dear. We shall all eat in half an hour; and I was thinking to ask my cousin Manly to take a family morsel with us.

Sir Fran. Nay, for my cousin's good company, I don't care if I ride a day's journey without baiting.

Man. By no means, sir Francis. I am going upon a little business.

Sir Fran. Well, sir, I know you don't love compliments.

Man. You'll excuse me, madam—

Lady Wrong. Since you have business, sir—

[*Exit Manly.*

Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Oh, Mrs. Motherly, you were saying this morning

you had some very fine lace to shew me—can't I see it now? [Sir Francis stares.]

Moth. Why, really, madam, I had made a sort of a promise to let the Countess of Nicely have the first sight of it for the birth-day: but your ladyship—

Lady Wrong. Oh, I die if I don't see it before her.

'Squ. Rich. Woan't you go, feyther? [Apart.]

Sir Fran. Waunds, lad! I shall ha' uoa stomach at this rate. [Apart.]

Moth. Well, madam, though I say it, 'tis the sweetest pattern that ever came over—and for fineness—no cobweb comes up to it.

Sir Fran. Ods guts and gizzard, madam? Lace as fine as a cobweb! why, what the devil's that to cost now?

Moth. Nay, if sir Francis does not like of it, madam—

Lady Wrong. He like it! Dear Mrs. Motherly, he is not to wear it.

Sir Fran. Flesh, madam! but I suppose I am to pay for it.

Lady Wrong. No doubt on't! Think of your thousand a year, and who got it you; go, eat your dinner, and be thankful, go! [Driving him to the door.] Come, Mrs. Motherly.

[Exit Lady Wronghead with Mrs. Motherly.]

Sir Fran. Very fine! so here I mun fast, till I am almost famished, for the good of my country, while madam is laying me out an hundred pound a-day in lace as fine as a cobweb, for the honour of my family! Ods-flesh! things had need go well at this rate.

'Squ. Rich. Nay, nay—come, feyther.

[Exeunt Sir Fran. and 'Squ. Rich.]

Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Moth. Madam, my lady desires you and the count will please to come and assist her fancy in some of the new laces.

Count Bas. We'll wait upon her.

[Exit Mrs. Motherly.]

Jenny. So, I told you how it was! you see she can't bear to leave us together.

Count Bas. No matter, my dear: you know she has ask'd me to stay supper; so when your papa and she are a-bed, Mrs. Myrtilla will let me into the house again; then you may steal into her chamber, and we'll have a pretty sneaker of punch together.

Myr. Ay, ay, madam, you may command me in any thing.

Jenny. Well, that will be pure!

Count Bas. But you had best go to her alone, my life: it will look better if I come after you.

Jenny. Ay, so it will: and to-morrow, you know, at the masquerade. And then!—

“ S O N G .

“ *Oh, I'll have a husband! ay, marry;*

“ *For why should I longer tarry,*

“ *For why should I longer tarry,*

“ *Than other brisk girls have done?*

“ *For if I stay till I grow grey,*

“ *They'll call me old maid, and fusty old jade;*

“ *So I'll no longer tarry;*

“ *But I'll have a husband, ay, marry,*

“ *If money can buy me one.*

“ *My mother, she says, I'm too coming;*

“ *And still in my ears she is drumming,*

“ *And still in my ears she is drumming,*

“ *That I such vain thoughts should shun.*

“ *My sisters they cry, oh, fy! and, oh, fy!*

“ *But yet I can see, they're as coming as me;*

“ *So let me have husbands in plenty:*

“ *I'd rather have twenty times twenty,*

“ *Than die an old maid undone.*” [Exit.

Myr. So, sir, am not I very commode to you?

Count Bas. Well, child, and don't you find your account in it? Did I not tell you we might still be of use to one another?

Myr. Well, but how stands your affair with miss in the main?

Count Bas. Oh, she's mad for the masquerade! It drives like a nail; we want nothing now but a parson to clinch it. Did not your aunt say she could get one at a short warning?

Myr. Yes, yes, my lord Townly's chaplain is her cousin, you know; he'll do your business and mine at the same time.

Count Bas. Oh, it's true; but where shall we appoint him?

Myr. Why, you know my lady Townly's house is always open to the masks upon a ball-night, before they go to the Hay-market.

Count Bas. Good.

Myr. Now the doctor purposes we should all come thither in our habits, and when the rooms are full, we may steal up into his chamber, he says, and there—crack—he'll give us all canonical commission to go to-bed together.

Count Bas. Admirable! Well, the devil fetch me, if I shall not be heartily glad to see thee well-settled, child.

Myr. And may the black gentleman tuck me under his arm at the same time, if I shall not think myself obliged to you as long as I live.

Count Bas. One kiss for old acquaintance sake—I'gad I shall want to be busy again.

Myr. Oh, you'll have one shortly will find you employment—but I must run to my 'squire.

Count Bas. And I to the ladies—so your humble servant, sweet Mrs. Wronghead.

Myr. Yours, as in duty bound, most noble Count Basset.

[Exit Myr.]

Count Bas. Why, ay! count! That title has been of some use to me indeed; not that I have any more pretence to it than I have to a blue ribband. Yet, I made a pretty considerable figure in life with it. I have lolled in my own chariot, dealt at assemblies, dined with ambassadors, and made one at quadrille with the first women of quality——But—*tempora mutantur*——since that damn'd squadron at White's have left me

out of their last secret, I am reduced to trade upon my own stock of industry, and make my last push upon a wife. If my card comes up right (which, I think, cannot fail), I shall once more cut a figure, and cock my hat in the face of the best of them : for since our modern men of fortune are grown wise enough to be sharpers, I think sharpers are fools that don't take up the airs of men of quality. — [Exit.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Lord Townly's House. Enter MANLY and Lady GRACE.

“ *Manly.* THERE's something, madam, hangs upon your mind to-day : is it unfit to trust me with it ?

“ *Lady G.* Since you will know—my sister, then—
“ unhappy woman !

“ *Man.* What of her ?

“ *Lady G.* I fear is on the brink of ruin.

“ *Man.* I am sorry for it—what has happened ?

“ *Lady G.* Nothing so very new ; but the continual repetition of it at last has raised my brother to
“ an intemperance that I tremble at.

“ *Man.* Have they had any words upon it ?

“ *Lady G.* He has not seen her since yesterday.

“ *Man.* What ! not at home all night ?

“ *Lady G.* About five this morning, in she came ;
“ but with such looks, and such an equipage of mis-
“ fortunes at her heels—What can become of her ?

“ *Man.* Has not my lord seen her, say you ?

“ *Lady G.* No ; he changed his bed last night—
“ I sat with him alone till twelve, in expectation of
“ her : but when the clock struck, he started from
“ his chair, and grew incensed to that degree, that
“ had I not, almost on my knees, dissuaded him,
“ he had ordered the doors, that instant, to have been
“ locked against her.

“ *Man.* How terrible is his situation, when the
“ most justifiable severities he can use against her

“ are liable to be the mirth of all the dissolute card-
“ tables in town.

“ *Lady G.* 'Tis that, I know, has made him bear
“ so long: but you that feel for him, Mr. Manly,
“ will assist him to support his honour, and, if pos-
“ sible, preserve his quiet; therefore I beg you don't
“ leave the house, till one or both of them can be
“ wrought into better temper.

“ *Man.* How amiable is this concern in you!

“ *Lady G.* For Heaven's sake, don't mind me;
“ but think on something to preserve us all.

“ *Man.* I shall not take the merit of obeying your
“ commands; madam, to serve my lord—But pray,
“ madam, let me into all that has past since yesternight.

“ *Lady G.* When my intreaties had prevailed upon
“ my lord, not to make a story for the town, by so
“ public a violence, as shutting her at once out of
“ his doors, he ordered an apartment next to my
“ lady's to be made ready for him—While that was
“ doing, I tried, by all the little arts I was mistress
“ of, to amuse him into temper; in short, a silent
“ grief was all I could reduce him to—On this, we
“ took our leaves, and parted to our repose: what his
“ was, I imagine by my own; for I ne'er closed my
“ eyes. About five, as I told you, I heard my lady
“ at the door; so I slipped on a gown, and sat al-
“ most an hour with her in her own chamber.

“ *Man.* What said she, when she did not find my
“ lord there?

“ *Lady G.* Oh! so far from being shocked or
“ alarmed at it, that she blessed the occasion; and
“ said that, in her conditon, the chat of a female
“ friend was far preferable to the best husband's
“ company in the world.

“ *Man.* Where has she spirits to support so much
“ insensibility?

“ *Lady G.* Nay, 'tis incredible; for though she had
“ lost every shilling she had in the world, and stretched
“ her credit even to breaking, she rallied her own
“ follies with such vivacity, and painted the penance

“ she knows she must undergo for them in such ridiculous lights, that had not my concern for a brother been too strong for her wit, she had almost disarmed my anger.

“ *Man.* Her mind may have another cast by this time: the most flagrant dispositions have their hours of anguish, which their pride conceals from company. But pray, madam, how could she avoid coming down to dine?

“ *Lady G.* Oh! she took care of that before she went to bed, by ordering her woman, whenever she was asked for, to say she was not well.

“ *Man.* You have seen her since she was up, I presume?

“ *Lady G.* Up! I question whether she be awake yet.

“ *Man.* Terrible; what a figure does she make now! That nature should throw away so much beauty upon a creature, to make such a slatternly use of it!

“ *Lady G.* Oh, fie! there is not a more elegant beauty in town, when she is dressed.

“ *Man.* In my eye, madam, she that's early dressed has ten times her elegance.

“ *Lady G.* But she won't be long now, I believe; for I think I see her chocolate going up—Mrs. Trusty—a hem!

“ *Mrs. TRUSTY comes to the door.*

“ *Man.* [*Aside*] Five o'clock in the afternoon for a lady of quality's breakfast is an elegant hour indeed! which, to shew her more polite way of living too, I presume she eats in her bed.

“ *Lady G.* [*To Mrs. Trusty.*] And when she is up, I would be glad she would let me come to her toilet—That's all, Mrs. Trusty.

“ *Trusty.* I will be sure to let her ladyship know, madam. [*Exit.*]

“ *Enter a Servant.*

“ *Serv.* Sir Francis Wronghead, sir, desires to speak with you.

“ *Man.* He comes unseasonably—What shall I do with him?

“ *Lady G.* Oh, see him, by all means! we shall have time enough; in the mean while, I'll step in and have an eye upon my brother. Nay, don't mind me—you have business—

“ *Man.* You must be obeyed—

“ [*Retreating, while Lady Grace goes out.*]
“ Desire Sir Francis to walk in—[*Exit Servant.*] I suppose, by this time, his wise worship begins to find that the balance of his journey to London is on the wrong side.”

Enter Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Francis, your servant. How came I by the favour of this extraordinary visit?

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin!

Man. Why that sorrowful face, man?

Sir Fran. I have no friend alive but you—

Man. I am sorry for that—But what's the matter?

Sir Fran. I have played the fool by this journey, I see now—for my bitter wife—

Man. What of her?

Sir Fran. Is playing the devil.

Man. Why, truly, that's a part that most of your fine ladies begin with, as soon as they get to London.

Sir Fran. If I'm a living man, cousin, she has made away with above two hundred and fifty pounds since yesterday morning.

Man. Ha! I see a good housewife will do a great deal of work in a little time.

Sir Fran. Work, do they call it? Fine work, indeed!

Man. Well, but how do you mean made away with it? What, she has laid it out, may be—but I suppose you have an account of it.

Sir Fran. Yes, yes, I have had the account, indeed; but I mun needs say, it's a very sorry one.

Man. Pray, let's hear?

Sir Fran. Why, first I let her have an hundred and fifty, to get things handsome about her, to let

the world see that I was somebody; and thought that sum was very genteel.

Man. Indeed I think so; and in the country might have served her a twelvemonth.

Sir Fran. Why, so it might—but here, in this fine town, forsooth, it could not get through four-and-twenty hours—for in half that time it was all squandered away in bawbles, and new-fashioned trumpery.

Man. Oh! for ladies in London, Sir Francis, all this might be necessary.

Sir Fran. Noa, there's the plague on't; the devil o' one useful thing do I see for it, but two pair of laced shoes, and those stond me in three pounds three shillings a pair, too.

Man. Dear sir, this is nothing; Why we have city wives here, that while their good man is selling three pennyworth of sugar, will give you twenty pounds for a short apron.

Sir Fran. Mercy on us, what a mortal poor devil is a husband!

Man. Well, but I hope you have nothing else to complain of.

Sir Fran. Ah, would I could say so too!—but there's another hundred behind yet, that goes more to my heart than all that went before it.

Man. And how might that be disposed of?

Sir Fran. Troth, I am almost ashamed to tell you,

Man. Out with it.

Sir Fran. Why, she has been at an assembly.

Man. What, since I saw you! I thought you had all supped at home last night.

Sir Fran. Why so we did—and all as merry as grigs—I'cod my heart was so open that I tossed another hundred into her apron, to go out early this morning with—But the cloth was no sooner taken away, than in comes my lady Townly here, (who, between you and I—mum—has had the devil to pay yonder) with another rantipole dame of quality, and out they must have her, they said, to introduce her at my lady No-

ble's assembly, forsooth—A few words, you may be sure, made the bargain—so, bawnee! and away they drive, as if the devil had got into the coach-box—so, about four or five in the morning—home comes madam, with her eyes a foot deep in her head—and my poor hundred pounds left behind her at the hazard-table.

Man. All lost at dice!

Sir Fran. Every shilling—among a parcel of pig-tail puppies, and pale-faced women of quality.

Man. But pray, sir Francis, how came you, after you found her so ill an housewife of one sum, so soon to trust her with another?

Sir Fran. Why, truly, I mun say that was partly my own fault: for if I had not been a blab of my tongue, I believe that last hundred might have been saved.

Man. How so?

Sir Fran. Why, like an owl as I was, out of goodwill, forsooth, partly to keep her in humour, I must needs tell her of the thousand pounds a-year I had just got the promise of—I'cod, she lays her claws upon it that moment—said it was all owing to her advice, and truly she would have her share on't.

Man. What, before you had it yourself?

Sir Fran. Why, ay, that's what I told her—My dear, said I, mayhap I mayn't receive the first quarter on't this half year.

Man. Sir Francis, I have heard you with a great deal of patience, and I really feel compassion for you.

Sir Fran. Truly, and well you may, cousin; for I don't see that my wife's goodness is a bit the better for bringing to London.

Man. If you remember, I gave you a hint of it.

Sir Fran. Why, ay, it's true, you did so; but the devil himself could not have believed she would have rid post to him.

Man. Sir, if you stay but a fortnight in this town, you will every day see hundreds as fast upon the gallop as she is.

Sir Fran. Ah, this London is a base place indeed! —Waunds, if things should happen to go wrong with me at Westminster, at this rate, how the devil shall I keep out of a jail?

Man. Why, truly, there seems to be but one way to avoid it.

Sir Fran. Ah, would you could tell me that, cousin!

Man. The way lies plain before you, sir; the same road that brought you hither, will carry you safe home again.

Sir Fran. Ods-flesh, cousin! what! and leave a thousand pounds a year behind me?

Man. Pooh, pooh! leave any thing behind you, but your family, and you are a saver by it.

Sir Fran. Ay, but consider, cousin, what a scurvy figure shall I make in the country, if I come down withawt it.

Man. You will make a much more lamentable figure in a jail without it.

Sir Fran. Mayhap 'at yow have no great opinion of it then, cousin?

Man. Sir Francis, to do you the service of a real friend, I must speak very plainly to you: you don't yet see half the ruin that's before you.

Sir Fran. Good-lack! how may you mean, cousin?

Man. In one word, your whole affairs stand thus —In a week you'll lose your seat at Westminster —In a fortnight my lady will run you into jail, by keeping the best company —In four-and-twenty hours your daughter will run away with a sharper, because she han't been used to better company: and your son will steal into marriage with a cast mistress, because he has not been used to any company at all.

Sir Fran. I' th' name of goodness, why should you think all this?

Man. Because I have proof of it; in short, I know so much of their secrets, that if all this is not prevented to-night, it will be out of your power to do it to-morrow morning.

Sir Fran. Mercy upon us! you frighten me——
Well, sir, I will be governed by you: but what am I to do in this case?

Man. I have not time here to give you proper instructions; but about eight this evening I'll call at your lodgings, and there you shall have full conviction how much I have it at heart to serve you.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Sir, my lord desires to speak with you.

Man. I'll wait upon him.

Sir Fran. Well, then, I'll go strait home, naw.

Man. At eight depend upon me.

Sir Fran. Ah, dear cousin! I shall be bound to you as long as I live. Mercy deliver us, what a terrible journey have I made on't. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

Opens to a Dressing-room; Lady TOWNLY, as just up, walks to her Toilet, leaning on Mrs. TRUSTY.

Trust. Dear madam, what should make your ladyship so out of order?

Lady T. How is it possible to be well, where one is killed for want of sleep?

Trust. Dear me! it was so long before you rung, madam, I was in hopes your ladyship had been finely composed.

Lady T. Composed! why I have lain in an inn here; this house is worse than an inn with ten stage-coaches: what between my lord's impertinent people of business in a morning, and the intolerable thick shoes of footmen at noon, one has not a wink all night.

Trust. Indeed, madam, it's a great pity my lord can't be persuaded into the hours of people of quality—though I must say that, madam, your ladyship is certainly the best matrimonial manager in town.

Lady T. Oh, you are quite mistaken, Trusty! I manage very ill; for, notwithstanding all the power I have, by never being over-fond of my lord—yet I want money infinitely oftener than he is willing to give it me.

Trust. Ah! if his lordship could but be brought to play himself, madam, then he might feel what it is to want money.

Lady T. Oh, don't talk of it! do you know that I am undone, Trusty?

Trust. Mercy forbid, madam!

Lady T. Broke, ruined, plundered!—stripped, even to a confiscation of my last guinea!

Trust. You don't tell me so, madam?

Lady T. And where to raise ten pound in the world—What is to be done, Trusty?

Trust. Truly, I wish I were wise enough to tell you, madam: but may be your ladyship may have a run of better fortune upon some of the good company that comes here to-night.

Lady T. But I have not a single guinea to try my fortune.

Trust. Ha! that's a bad business indeed, madam—Adad, I have a thought in my head, madam, if it is not too late—

Lady T. Out with it quickly, then, I beseech thee.

Trust. Has not the steward something of fifty pounds, madam, that you left in his hands to pay somebody about this time?

Lady T. Oh, ay; I had forgot—'twas to—a—what's his filthy name?

Trust. Now I remember, madam, 'twas to Mr. Lutestring, your old mercer, that your ladyship turned off about a year ago, because he would trust you no longer.

Lady T. The very wretch! If he has not paid it, run quickly, dear Trusty, and bid him bring it hither immediately—[*Exit Trusty.*] Well, sure mortal woman never had such fortune! five, five and nine, against poor seven for ever—No, after that horrid bar of my chance, that Lady Wronghead's fatal red fist upon the table, I saw it was impossible ever to win another stake—Sit up all night; lose all one's money; dream of winning thousands; wake without a shilling; and then—How like a hag I look!—In short

the pleasures of life are not worth this disorder, If it were not for shame, now, I could almost think Lady Grace's sober scheme not quite so ridiculous—If my wise lord could but hold his tongue for a week, 'tis odds but I should hate the town in a fortnight—But I will not be driven out of it, that's positive.

TRUSTY returns.

Trust. Oh, madam, there's no bearing of it! Mr. Lutestring was just let in at the door, as I came to the stair-foot; and the steward is now actually paying him the money in the hall.

Lady T. Run to the stair-case head again—and scream to him, that I must speak with him this instant.

[*Trusty runs out and speaks.*

Trust. Mr. Poundage—a-hem! Mr. Poundage, a word with you quickly,

[*Without.*

Pound. I'll come to you presently.

[*Without.*

Trusty. Presently won't do, man, you must come this minute.

[*Without.*

Pound. I am but just paying a little money here.

[*Without.*

Trust. Cods my life, paying money! Is the man distracted? Come here, I tell you, to my lady this moment, quick!

[*Without.*

TRUSTY returns.

Lady T. Will the monster come, or no?

Trust. Yes, I hear him now, madam; he is hobbling up as fast as he can.

Lady T. Don't let him come in—for he will keep such a babbling about his accounts—my brain is not able to bear him.

[*Poundage comes to the door, with a money-bag in his hand.*

Trust. Oh, it's well you are come, sir! where's the fifty pounds?

Pound. Why, here it is; if you had not been in such haste, I should have paid it by this time—the man's now writing a receipt, below, for it.

Trust. No matter; my lady says you must not pay

him with that money! there's not enough, it seems; there's a pistole, and a guinea, that is not good, in it—besides, there is a mistake in the account too—*[Twitches the bag from him.]* But she is not at leisure to examine it now, so you must bid Mr. What-d'ye-call-um call another time.

Lady T. What is all that noise there?

Pound. Why, and it please your ladyship—

Lady T. Pr'ythee, don't plague me now; but do as you were ordered.

Pound. Nay, what your ladyship pleases, madam.
[Exit Poundage.]

Trust. There they are, madam—*[Pours the money out of the bag.]*—The pretty things—were so near falling into a nasty tradesman's hand. I protest it made me tremble for them—I fancy your ladyship had as good give me that bad guinea, for luck's sake—thank you, madam.
[Takes a guinea.]

Lady T. Why, I did not bid you take it.

Trust. No; but your ladyship looked as if you were just going to bid me; and so I was willing to save you the trouble of speaking, madam.

Lady T. Well, thou hast deserved it; and so, for once—but hark! don't I hear the man making a noise yonder? Though, I think, now, we may compound for a little of his ill-humour—

Trust. I'll listen.

Lady T. Pr'ythee do. *[Trusty goes to the door.]*

Trust. Ay, they are at it, madam—he's in a bitter passion with poor Poundage—Bless me! I believe he'll beat him—Mercy on us, how the wretch swears!

Lady T. And a sober citizen too! that's a shame.

Trust. Ha! I think all's silent of a sudden—may be the porter has knocked him down—I'll step and see—
[Exit Trusty.]

Lady T. These trades-people are the troublesomest creatures! No words will satisfy them.

[Trusty returns.]

Trust. Oh, madam! undone, undone! My lord has just bolted out upon the man, and is hearing all

his pitiful story over——If your ladyship pleases to come hither, you may hear him yourself.

Lady T. No matter; it will come round presently: I shall have it from my lord, without losing a word by the way, I'll warrant you.

Trust. Oh, lud, madam! here's my lord just coming in.

Lady T. Do you get out of the way, then. [*Exit Trusty.*] I am afraid I want spirits; but he will soon give 'em me.

Enter Lord TOWNLY.

Lord T. How comes it, madam, that a tradesman dares be clamorous in my house, for money due to him from you?

Lady T. You don't expect, my lord, that I should answer for other people's impertinence.

Lord T. I expect, madam, you should answer for your own extravagances, that are the occasion of it—I thought I had given you money three months ago, to satisfy all these sort of people.

Lady T. Yes; but you see they never are to be satisfied.

Lord T. Nor am I, madam, longer to be abused thus; what's become of the last five hundred I gave you?

Lady T. Gone.

Lord T. Gone! what way, madam?

Lady T. Half the town over, I believe, by this time.

Lord T. 'Tis well; I see ruin will make no impression, till it falls upon you.

Lady T. In short, my lord, if money is always the subject of our conversation, I shall make you no answer.

Lord T. Madam, madam, I will be heard, and make you answer.

Lady T. Make me! Then I must tell you, my lord, this is a language I have not been used to, and I won't bear it.

Lord T. Come, come, madam, you shall bear a great deal more, before I part with you.

Lady T. My lord, if you insult me, you will have as much to bear on your side, I can assure you.

Lord T. Pooh! your spirit grows ridiculous—you have neither honour, worth, or innocence to support it.

Lady T. You'll find, at least, I have resentment; and do you look well to the provocation.

Lord T. After those you have given me, madam, 'tis almost infamous to talk with you.

Lady T. I scorn your imputation, and your menaces. The narrowness of your heart's your monitor; 'tis there, there, my lord, you are wounded: you have less to complain of than many husbands of an equal rank to you.

Lord T. Death, madam! do you presume upon your corporal merit, that your person's less tainted than your mind? Is it there, there alone, an honest husband can be injured? Have you not every other vice that can debase your birth, or stain the heart of woman? Is not your health, your beauty, husband, fortune, family disclaimed, for nights consumed in riot and extravagance? The wanton does no more; if she conceals her shame, does less: and sure the dissolute avowed, as sorely wrongs my honour and my quiet.

Lady T. I see, my lord, what sort of wife might please you.

Lord T. Ungrateful woman! could you have seen yourself, you in yourself had seen her—I am amazed our legislature has left no precedent of a divorce, for this more visible injury, this adultery of the mind, as well as that of the person! When a woman's whole heart is alienated to pleasures I have no share in, what is it to me, whether a black ace, or a powdered coxcomb has possession of it.

Lady T. If you have not found it yet, my lord, this is not the way to get possession of mine, depend upon it.

Lord T. That, madam, I have long despaired of; and since our happiness cannot be mutual, 'tis fit that

with our hearts, our persons too should separate.—
This house you sleep no more in: though your content might grossly feed upon the dishonour of a husband; yet my desires would starve upon the features of a wife.

Lady T. Your style, my lord, is much of the same delicacy with your sentiments of honour.

Lord T. Madam, madam, this is no time for compliments—I have done with you.

Lady T. If we had never met, my lord, I had not broke my heart for it: but have a care; I may not, perhaps, be so easily recalled as you may imagine.

Lord T. Recalled!—Who's there?

Enter Servant.

Desire my sister and Mr. Manly to walk up.

[*Exit Serv.*]

Lady T. My lord, you may proceed as you please; but pray, what indiscretions have I committed, that are not daily practised by a hundred other women of quality?

Lord T. 'Tis not the number of ill wives, madam, that makes the patience of a husband less contemptible: and though a bad one may be the best man's lot, yet he'll make a better figure in the world, that keeps his misfortunes out of doors, than he that tamely keeps them within.

Lady T. I don't know what figure you may make, my lord; but I shall have no reason to be ashamed of mine, in whatever company I may meet you.

Lord T. Be sparing of your spirit, madam; you'll need it to support you.

Enter Lady GRACE and MANLY.

Mr. Manly, I have an act of friendship to beg of you, which wants more apologies than words can make for it.

Man. Then pray make none, my lord, that I may have the greater merit in obliging you.

Lord T. Sister, I have the same excuse to intreat of you, too.

Lady G. To your request, I beg, my lord.

Lord T. Thus then—As you both were present at

my ill-considered marriage, I now desire you each will be a witness of my determined separation—I know, sir, your good-nature, and my sister's, must be shocked at the office I impose on you; but as I don't ask your justification of my cause, so I hope you are conscious—that an ill woman can't reproach you, if you are silent, on her side.

Man. My lord, I never thought, till now, it could be difficult to oblige you.

Lady G. [*Aside.*] Heavens, how I tremble!

Lord T. For you, my Lady Townly, I need not here repeat the provocations of my parting with you—the world, I fear, is too well informed of them—For the good lord, your dead father's sake, I will still support you as his daughter—As Lord Townly's wife, you have had every thing a fond husband could bestow, and (to our mutual shame I speak it) more than happy wives desire—But those indulgences must end; state, equipage, and splendor, but ill becomes the vices that misuse them—The decent necessities of life shall be supplied—but not one article to luxury; not even the coach that waits to carry you from hence shall you ever use again. Your tender aunt, my lady Lovemore, with tears, this morning, has consented to receive you; where, if time, and your condition, brings you to a due reflection, your allowance shall be increased—but if you are still lavish of your little, or pine for past licentious pleasures, that little shall be less: nor will I call that soul my friend that names you in my hearing.

Lady G. My heart bleeds for her. [*Aside.*

Lord T. Oh, Manly, look there! turn back thy thoughts with me, and witness to my growing love. There was a time, when I believed that form incapable of vice or of decay; there I proposed the partner of an easy home; there I, for ever, hoped to find a cheerful companion, an agreeable intimate, a faithful friend, a useful help-mate, and a tender mother—but, oh, how bitter now the disappointment!

Man. The world is different in its sense of happi-

ness; offended as you are, I know you will still be just.

Lord T. Fear me not.

Man. This last reproach, I see, has struck her.

[*Aside.*

Lord T. No, let me not (though I this moment cast her from my heart for ever) let me not urge her punishment beyond her crimes—I know the world is fond of any tale that feeds its appetite of scandal: and as I am conscious severities of this kind seldom fail of imputations too gross to mention, I here, before you both, acquit her of the least suspicion, raised against the honour of my bed. Therefore, when abroad her conduct may be questioned, do her fame that justice.

Lady T. Oh, sister!

[*Turns to Lady Grace, weeping.*

Lord T. When I am spoken of, where without favour this action may be canvassed, relate but half my provocations, and give me up to censure. [*Going.*

Lady T. Support me! save me! hide me from the world?

[*Falling on Lady Grace's neck.*

Lord T. [*Returning.*—I had forgot me—You have no share in my resentment, therefore, as you have lived in friendship with her, your parting may admit of gentler terms than suit the honour of an injured husband.

[*Offers to go out.*

Man. [*Interposing.*] My lord, you must not, shall not leave her thus! One moment's stay can do your cause no wrong! If looks can speak the anguish of her heart, I'll answer with my life there's something labouring in her mind, that would you bear the hearing might deserve it.

Lord T. Consider! since we no more can meet, press not my staying to insult her.

Lady T. Yet stay, my lord—the little I would say will not deserve an insult; and undeserved, I know your nature gives it not. But as you've called in friends, to witness your resentment, let them be equal hearers of my last reply.

Lord T. I shan't refuse you that, madam—be it so.

Lady T. My lord, you ever have complain'd I wanted love: but as you kindly have allowed I never gave it to another; so, when you hear the story of my heart, though you may still complain, you will not wonder at my coldness.

Lady G. This promises a reverse of temper. [*Apart.*]

Man. This my lord, you are concerned to hear.

Lord T. Proceed, I am attentive.

Lady T. Before I was your bride, my lord, the flattering world had talked me into beauty; which at my glass, my youthful vanity confirmed. Wild with that fame, I thought mankind my slaves, I triumphed over hearts, while all my pleasure was their pain: yet was my own so equally insensible to all, that when a father's firm commands enjoined me to make choice of one, I even there declined the liberty he gave, and to his own election yielded up my youth—his tender care, my lord, directed him to you—Our hands were joined! But still my heart was wedded to its folly! My only joy was power, command, society, profuseness, and to lead in pleasures! The husband's right to rule I thought a vulgar law, which only the deformed or meanly-spirited obeyed! I knew no directors, but my passions; no master, but my will! Even you, my lord, some time o'ercome by love, was pleased with my delights! nor, then, foresaw this mad mistake of your indulgence—And, though I call myself ungrateful, while I own it, yet, as a truth it cannot be denied—that kind indulgence has undone me; it added strength to my habitual failings, and in an heart thus warm, in wild unthinking life, no wonder if the gentler sense of love was lost.

Lord T. Oh, Manly! where has this creature's heart been buried? [*Apart.*]

Man. If yet recoverable—How vast the treasure.

[*Apart.*]

Lady T. What I have said, my lord, is not my excuse, but my confession; my errors (give 'em, if you please, a harder name) cannot be defended! No!

What's in its nature wrong, no words can palliate, no plea can alter! What then remains in my condition, but resignation to your pleasure? Time only can convince you of my future conduct: therefore 'till I have lived an object of forgiveness, I dare not hope for pardon—The penance of a lonely contrite life were little to the innocent; but to have deserved this separation, will strew perpetual thorns upon my pillow.

Lady G. Oh, happy, heavenly hearing!

Lady T. Sister, farewell! [*Kissing her.*] Your virtue needs no warning from the shame that falls on me: but when you think I have atoned my follies past—persuade your injured brother to forgive them.

Lord T. No, madam! Your errors thus renounced, this instant are forgotten! So deep, so due a sense of them, has made you, what my utmost wishes formed, and all my heart has sighed for.

Lady T. [*Turning to Lady Grace.*] How odious does this goodness make me!

Lady G. How amiable your thinking so!

Lord T. Long parted friends, that pass through easy voyages of life, receive but common gladness in their meeting; but from a shipwreck saved we mingle tears with our embraces! [*Embracing Lady Townly.*

Lady T. What words? what love? what duty can repay such obligations?

Lord T. Preserve but this desire to please, your power is endless.

Lady T. Oh!—'till this moment, never did I know, my lord, I had a heart to give you.

Lord T. By Heaven! this yielding hand, when first it gave you to my wishes, presented not a treasure more desirable! Oh, Manly! sister! as you have often shared in my disquiet, partake of my felicity! my new-born joy! see here the bride of my desires! This may be called my wedding-day.

Lady G. Sister, (for now, methinks, that name is dearer to my heart than ever) let me congratulate the happiness that opens to you.

Man. Long, long, and mutual may it flow—

Lord T. To make our happiness complete, my dear, join here with me to give a hand, that amply will repay the obligation.

Lady T. Sister, a day like this—

Lady G. Admits of no excuse against the general joy. *[Gives her hand to Manly.]*

Man. A joy like mine—despairs of words to speak it.

Lord T. Oh, Manly, how the name of friend endears the brother! *[Embracing him.]*

Man. Your words, my lord, will warm me to deserve them.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. My lord, the apartments are full of masqueraders—And some people of quality there desire to see your lordship and my lady.

Lady T. I thought, my lord, your orders had forbid their revelling?

Lord T. No, my dear, Manly has desired their admittance to-night, it seems, upon a particular occasion—Say we will wait upon them instantly.

[Exit Servant.]

Lady T. I shall be but ill company to them.

Lord T. No matter: not to see them, would on a sudden be too particular. Lady Grace will assist you to entertain them.

Lady T. With her, my lord, I shall be always easy—Sister, to your unerring virtue I now commit the guidance of my future days—

*Never the paths of pleasure more to tread,
But where your guarded innocence shalt lead;
For in the marriage state, the world must own,
Divided happiness was never known.*

To make it mutual nature points the way:

Let husbands govern; gentle wives obey. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

“ Opening to another Apartment discovers a great
“ number of people in masquerade, talking all toge-
“ ther, and playing upon one another. *Lady Wrong-*

“ head as a shepherdess; Jenny as a nun; the
 “ ‘Squire as a running foolman; and the Count in a
 “ domino. After some time Lord and Lady Townly,
 “ with Lady Grace, enter to them unmasked.
 “ Lord T. So! here’s a great deal of company.
 “ Lady T. A great many people, my lord, but no
 “ company—as you’ll find—for here’s one now that
 “ seems to have a mind to entertain us.

“ [*A Mask, after some affected gesture, makes
 up to Lady Townly.*]

“ Mask. Well, dear Lady Townly, shan’t we see
 “ you by-and-by?

“ Lady T. I don’t know you, madam.

“ Mask. Don’t you seriously? [*In a squeaking tone.*]

“ Lady T. Not I, indeed.

“ Mask. Well, that’s charming; but can’t you
 “ guess?

“ Lady T. Yes, I could guess wrong, I believe.

“ Mask. That’s what I’d have you do.

“ Lady T. But, madam, if I don’t know you at
 “ all, is not that as well.

“ Mask. Ay, but you do know me.

“ Lady T. Dear sister, take her off o’ my hands;
 “ there’s no bearing this. [*Apart.*]

“ Lady G. I fancy I know you, madam.

“ Mask. I fancy you don’t; what makes you think
 “ you do?

“ Lady G. Because I have heard you talk.

“ Mask. Ay, but you don’t know my voice, I’m
 “ sure.

“ Lady G. There is something in your wit and hu-
 “ mour, madam, so very much your own, it is im-
 “ possible you can be any body but my Lady Trifle.

“ Mask. [*Unmasking.*] Dear Lady Grace! thou
 “ art a charming creature.

“ Lady G. Is there nobody else we know here?

“ Mask. Oh dear, yes! I have found out fifty al-
 “ ready.

“ Lady G. Pray who are they!

“ Mask. Oh, charming company! there’s Lady

“ Ramble—Lady Riot—Lady Kill-care—Lady Squan-
 “ der—Lady Strip—Lady Pawn—and the Duchess of
 “ Single-Guinea.

“ *Lord T.* Is it not hard, my dear, that people of
 “ sense and probity are sometimes forced to seem fond
 “ of such company? [*Apart.*]

“ *Lady T.* My lord, it will always give me pain
 “ to remember their acquaintance, but none to drop
 “ it immediately. [*Apart.*]

“ *Lady G.* But you have given us no account of
 “ the men, madam. Are they good for any thing?

“ *Mask.* Oh, yes, you must know, I always find
 “ out them by their endeavours to find out me.

“ *Lady G.* Pray, who are they?

“ *Mask.* Why, for your men of tip-top wit and
 “ pleasure, about town, there's my Lord—Bite—
 “ Lord Archwag—Young Brazen-wit—Lord Tim-
 “ berdown—Lord Joint-life—and—Lord Mortgage.
 “ Then for your pretty fellows only—there's Sir
 “ Powder-Peacock—Lord Lapwing—Billy Magpie
 “ —Beau Frightful—Sir Paul Plaister-crown, and
 “ the Marquis of Monkey-man.

“ *Lady G.* Right! and these are the fine gentle-
 “ men that never want elbow-room at an assembly.

“ *Mask.* The rest, I suppose, by their tawdry
 “ hired habits, are tradesmen's wives, inns-of-court
 “ beaux, Jews, and kept mistresses.

“ *Lord T.* An admirable collection!

“ *Lady G.* Well, of all our public diversions, I am
 “ amazed how this, that is so very expensive, and has
 “ so little to show for it, can draw so much company
 “ together.

“ *Lord T.* Oh, if it were not expensive, the better
 “ sort would not come into it: and because money
 “ can purchase a ticket, the common people scorn to
 “ be kept out of it.

“ *Mask.* Right, my lord. Poor Lady Grace! I
 “ suppose you are under the same astonishment that
 “ an opera should draw so much good company.

“ *Lady G.* Not at all, madam; it's an easier mat-

“ter sure to gratify the ear, than the understanding.
 “But have you no notion, madam, of receiving pleasure and profit at the same time?

“*Mask.* Oh, quite none! unless it be sometimes winning a great stake; laying down a *vole sans prendre*, may come up, to the profitable pleasure you were speaking of.

“*Lord T.* You seem attentive, my dear! [*Apart.*

“*Lady T.* I am, my lord; and amazed at my own follies, so strongly painted in another woman.

[*Apart.*

“*Lady G.* But see, my lord, we had best adjourn our debate, I believe, for here are some masks that seem to have a mind to divert other people as well as themselves.

“*Lord T.* The least we can do is to give them a clear stage then.

“[*A dance of masks here in various characters.*
 “This was a favour extraordinary.

“*Enter MANLY.*

“Oh, Manly, I thought we had lost you.

“*Man.* I ask pardon, my lord; but I have been obliged to look a little after my country-family.

“*Lord T.* Well, pray, what have you done with them?

“*Man.* They are all in the house here, among the masks, my lord; if your lordship has curiosity enough to step into a lower apartment, in three minutes I'll give you an ample account of them.

“*Lord T.* Oh, by all means: we'll wait upon you.

“[*The scene shuts upon the masks to a smaller apartment.*]

MANLY re-enters with Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Fran. Well cousin, you have made my very hair stand on end! Waunds! if what you tell me be true, I'll stuff my whole family into a stage-coach, and trundle them into the country again on Monday morning.

Man. Stick to that, sir, and we may yet find a way to redeem all. In the mean time, place yourself be-

hind this screen, and for the truth of what I have told you, take the evidence of your own senses: but be sure you keep close till I give you the signal.

Sir Fran. Sir, I'll warrant you—Ah, my Lady! my Lady Wronghead! What a bitter business have you drawn me into.

Man. Hush! to your post; here comes one couple already.

[*Sir Francis retires behind the screen. Exit Manly.*

Enter MYRTILLA with 'Squire RICHARD.

'Squ. Rich. Well, is this the doctor's chamber?

Myr. Yes, yes, speak softly.

'Squ. Rich. Well, but where is he?

Myr. He'll be ready for us presently, but he says he can't do us the good turn without witnesses: so, when the count and your sister come, you know he and you may be fathers for one another.

'Squ. Rich. Well, well, tit for tat! ay, ay, that will be friendly.

Myr. And see, here they come.

Enter Count BASSET, and Miss JENNY.

Count Bas. So, so, here's your brother and his bride, before us, my dear.

Jenny. Well, I vow, my heart's at my mouth still! I thought I should never have got rid of mamma; but while she stood gaping upon the dance, I gave her the slip! Lawd, do but feel how it beats here.

Count Bas. Oh, the pretty flutterer! I protest, my dear, you have put mine into the same palpitation!

Jenny. Ay, say you so — but let's see now—Oh, lud! I vow it thumps purely—well, well, well, I see it would do, and so where's the parson?

Count Bas. Mrs. Myrtilla, will you be so good as to see if the doctor's ready for us.

Myr. He only staid for you, sir, I'll fetch him immediately. [Exit.

Jenny. Pray, sir, am not I to take place of mamma, when I'm a countess?

Count Bas. No doubt on't, my dear.

Jenny. Oh, lud! how her back will be up then,

when she meets me at an assembly, or you and I in our coach-and-six at Hyde-Park together!

Count Bas. Ay, or when she hears the box-keepers at an opera, call out—The Countess of Basset's servants!

Jenny. Well, I say it, that will be delicious! And then, mayhap, to have a fine gentleman, with a star and a what-d'ye-call um ribbon, lead me to my chair, with his hat under his arm all the way! Hold up, says the chairman; and so, says I, my lord, your humble servant. I suppose, madam, says he, we shall see you at my lady Quadrille's? Ay, ay, to be sure, my lord, says I—So in swops me; with my hoop stuffed up to my forehead; and away they trot, swing! swang! with my tassels dangling, and my flambeaux blazing, and—Oh! it's a charming thing to be a woman of quality!

Count Bas. Well! I see that, plainly, my dear, there's ne'er a duchess of 'em all will become an equipage like you.

Jenny. Well, well, do you find equipage, and I'll find airs, I warrant you.

“ SONG.

“ *What though they call me country lass,*

“ *I read it plainly in my glass,*

“ *That for a duchess I might pass;*

“ *Oh, could I see the day!*

“ *Would fortune but attend my call,*

“ *At park, at play, at ring and ball,*

“ *I'd brave the proudest of them all,*

“ *With a stand by—clear the way.*

“ *Surrounded by a crowd of beaux,*

“ *With smart toupees, and powder'd clothes,*

“ *At rivals I'd turn up my nose;*

“ *Oh, could I see the day!*

“ *I'd dart such glances from these eyes,*

“ *Should make some lord or duke my prize:*

“ *And then, oh, how I'd tyrannize,*

“ *With a stand by—clear the way.*

" Oh, then for ev'ry new delight,
 " For equipage and diamonds bright,
 " Quadrille, and plays, and balls all night;
 " Oh, could I see the day!
 " Of love and joy I'd take my fill,
 " The tedious hours of life to kill,
 " In ev'ry thing I'd have my will,
 " With a stand by—clear the way."

'Squ. Rich. Troth! I think this masquerading's the merriest game that ever I saw in my life! 'Thof' in my mind, and there were but a little wrestling or cudgel-playing now, it would help it hugely. But what a rope makes the parson stay so?

Count Bas. Oh, here he comes, I believe.

Enter MYRTILLA, with a Constable.

Const. Well, madam, pray which is the party that wants a spice of my office, here?

Myr. That's the gentleman. [*Pointing to the Count.*

Count Bas. Hey-day! what, in masquerade, doctor!

Const. Doctor! Sir, I believe you have mistaken your man: but if you are called Count Basset, I have a billet-doux in my hand for you, that will set you right presently.

Count Bas. What the devil's the meaning of all this?

Const. Only my Lord Chief Justice's warrant against you for forgery, sir.

Count Bas. Blood and thunder!

Const. And so, sir, if you please to pull off your fool's frock there, I'll wait upon you to the next justice of peace immediately.

Jenny. Oh, dear me, what's the matter? [*Trembling.*

Count Bas. Oh, nothing, only a masquerading frolic, my dear.

'Squ. Rich. Oh, ho, is that all?

Sir Fran. No, sirrah! that is not all.

[*Sir Francis coming softly behind the 'Squire, knocks him down with his cane.*

Enter MANLY.

'Squ. Rich. Oh, lawd! Oh, lawd! he has beaten my brains out.

Man. Hold, hold, sir Francis, have a little mercy upon my poor godson, pray sir.

Sir Fran. Wounds, cousin, I han't patience.

Count Bas. Manly! nay then I'm blown to the devil. [Aside.

'Squ. Rich. Oh, my head! my head!

Enter Lady WRONGHEAD.

Lady Wrong. What's the matter here, gentlemen? For heaven's sake! What, are you murdering my children?

Const. No, no, madam! no murder! only a little suspicion of felony, that's all.

Sir Fran. [To Jenny.] And for you, Mrs Hot-upon't, I could find in my heart to make you wear that habit as long as you live, you jade you. Do you know, hussy, that you were within two minutes of marrying a pickpocket.

Count Bas. So, so, all's out I find. [Aside.

Jenny. Oh, the mercy! why, pray, papa, is not the count a man of quality, then?

Sir Fran. Oh, yes, one of the unchanged ones, it seems.

Lady Wrong. [Aside.] Married! Oh, the confident thing! There was his urgent business then—slighted for her! I ha'n't patience!—and, for ought I know, I have been all this while making a friendship with a highwayman.

Man. Mr. Constable, secure there.

Sir Fran. Ah, my lady! my lady! this comes of your journey to London: but now I'll have a frolic of my own, madam; therefore pack up your trumpery this very night, for the moment my horses are able to crawl, you and your brats shall make a journey into the country again.

Lady Wrong. Indeed you are mistaken, Sir Francis—I shall not stir out of town yet, I promise you.

Sir Fran. Not stir? Wounds, madam—

Man. Hold, sir!—if you'll give me leave a little—I fancy I shall prevail with my lady to think better on't.

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin, you are a friend indeed!

Man. [*Apart to my lady.*] Look you madam, as to the favour you designed me, in sending this spurious letter inclosed to my Lady Grace, all the revenge I have taken, is to have saved your son and daughter from ruin—Now if you will take them fairly and quietly into the country again, I will save your ladyship from ruin.

Lady Wrong. What do you mean, sir?

Man. Why, Sir Francis—shall never know what is in this letter; look upon it. How it came into my hands you shall know at leisure.

Lady Wrong. Ha! my billet-doux to the count! and an appointment in it! I shall sink with confusion!

Man. What shall I say to Sir Francis, madam.

Lady Wrong. Dear sir, I am in such a trembling! preserve my honour, and I am all obedience.

[*Apart to Manly.*]

Man. Sir Francis—my lady is ready to receive your commands for her journey, whenever you please to appoint it.

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin, I doubt I am obliged to you for it.

Man. Come, come, Sir Francis, take it as you find it. Obedience in a wife is a good thing, though it were never so wonderful!—And now, sir, we have nothing to do but to dispose of this gentleman.

Count Bas. Mr. Manly; sir, I hope you won't ruin me.

Man. Did not you forge this note for five hundred pounds, sir?

Count Bas. Sir—I see you know the world, and therefore I shall not pretend to prevaricate—But it has hurt nobody yet, sir; I beg you will not stigmatize me; since you have spoiled my fortune in one family, I hope you won't be so cruel to a young fellow, as to put it out of my power, sir, to make it in another, sir.

Man. Look you, sir, I have not much time to waste with you: but if you expect mercy yourself, you must shew it to one you have been cruel to.

Count Bas. Cruel, sir!

Man. Have you not ruined this young woman?

Count Bas. I, sir!

Man. I know you have—therefore you can't blame her, if, in the fact you are charged with, she is a principal witness against you. However, you have one, and only one chance to get off with. Marry her this instant—and you take off her evidence.

Count Bas. Dear sir!

Man. No words, sir; a wife or a mittimus.

Count Bas. Lord, sir! this is the most unmerciful mercy!

Man. A private penance, or a public one—Constable!

Count Bas. Hold, sir, since you are pleased to give me my choice, I will not make so ill a compliment to the lady, as not to give her the preference.

Man. It must be done this minute, sir: the chaplain you expected is still within call.

Count Bas. Well, sir—since it must be so—Come, spouse—I am not the first of the fraternity, that has run his head into one noose, to keep it out of another.

Myr. Come, sir, don't repine: marriage is at worst but playing upon the square.

Count Bas. Ay, but the worst of the match too, is the devil.

Man. Well, sir, to let you see it is not so bad as you think it; as a reward for her honesty, in detecting your practices, instead of the forged bill you would have put upon her, there's a real one of five hundred pounds to begin a new honey-moon with.

[Gives it to Myrtilla.]

Count Bas. Sir, this is so generous an act—

Man. No compliments, dear sir—I am not at leisure now to receive them. Mr. Constable, will you be so good as to wait upon this gentleman into the next room, and give this lady in marriage to him?

Const. Sir, I'll do it faithfully.

Count Bas. Well, five hundred will serve to make a handsome push with, however.

[*Exeunt Count Bas. Myr. and Constable.*]

Sir Fran. And that I may be sure my family's rid of him for ever—come, my lady, let's even take our children along with us, and be all witnesses of the ceremony.

[*Exeunt Sir Fran. Lady Wrong. Miss, and Squire.*]

Man. Now, my lord, you may enter.

Enter Lord and Lady TOWNLY, and Lady GRACE.

Lord T. So, sir, I give you joy of your negotiation.

Man. You overhead it all, I presume?

Lady G. From first to last, sir.

Lord T. Never were knaves and fools better disposed of.

Man. A sort of poetical justice, my lord, not much above the judgment of a modern comedy.

Lord T. To heighten that resemblance, I think, sister, there only wants your rewarding the hero of the fable, by naming the day of his happiness.

Lady G. This day, to-morrow, every hour, I hope, of life to come, will shew I want not inclination to complete it.

Man. Whatever I may want, madam, you will always find endeavours to deserve you.

Lord T. Then all are happy.

Lady T. Sister, I give you joy consummate as the happiest pair can boast.

In you methinks, as in a glass, I see

The happiness that once advanc'd to me.

So visible the bliss, so plain the way,

How was it possible my sense could stray?

But now, a convert to this truth I come,

That married happiness is never found from home.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

EPILOGUE.

*METHINKS I hear some powder'd critics say ;
“ Damn it, this wise reform'd has spoil'd the play !
“ The coxcomb should have drawn her more in fashion,
“ Have gratified her softer inclination,
“ Have tipt her a gallant, and clinch'd the provo-
cation.”*

*But there our bard stopp'd short: for 'twere uncivil,
T' have a modern belle, all o'er a devil !
He hop'd, in honour of the sex, the age
Would hear one mended woman—on the stage.*

*From whence, you see, by common sense's rules,
Wives might be governed, were not husbands fools.
Whate'er by nature dames are prone to do,
They seldom stray but when they govern you.
When the wild wife perceives her deary tame,
No wonder then she plays him all the game.
But men of sense meet rarely that disaster ;
Women take pride where merit is their master :
Nay, she that with a weak man wisely lives,
Will seem t' obey the due commands he gives !
Happy obedience is no more a wonder,
When men are men, and keep them kindly under.
But modern consorts are such high-bred creatures,
They think a husband's power degrades their features :
That nothing more proclaims a reigning beauty,
Than that she never was reproached with duty :
And that the greatest blessing Heav'n e'er sent,
Is in a spouse, incurious and content.*

*To give such dames a diff'rent cast of thought,
By calling home the mind, these scenes were wrought.
If with a hand too rude the task is done,
We hope the scheme, by Lady Grace laid down,
Will all such freedom with the sex atone,
That virtue there unsoiled, by modish art,
Throws out attractions for a Manly's heart.*

*You, you, then, ladies, whose unquestion'd lives
Give you the foremost fame of happy wives,
Protect, for its attempt, this helpless play;
Nor leave it to the vulgar taste a prey;
Appear the frequent champions of its cause,
Direct the crowd, and give yourselves applause.*

THE END.











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Cumberland, R.
The British drama

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